

the Flag-Raising at Gray's Gulch" by Forrest Crissey

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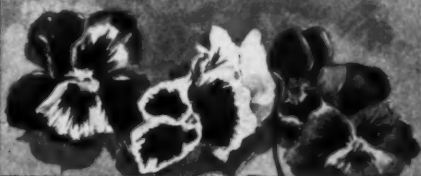
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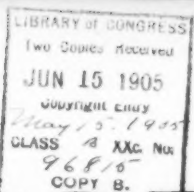
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DRAWN BY GUSTAVUS C. WIDNEY

"Turned her eyes upon the transfixed face of the mountain woman."

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THE RED BOOK

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July, 1905

No. 3

The Flag-Raising at Gray's Gulch

BY FORREST CRISSEY

Author of "The Country Boy," "Tattlings of a Retired Politician," etc.

Just before the trail tucked itself behind Thumb Point, shutting out the somber valley, she checked the pinto pony, turned in the saddle and looked back across the gulch. Her lower lip drew in, curiously, below the mobile tip of its mate, and from between them came a whistle as clear and chime-like as the note of a bell-bird. Then she leaned backward and listened intently, her head tilted to catch the faintest sound.

The answer came as distinctly—a yodeling call of "Gir-er-er-er-er-el-l!"

"Girl!" It shot her gray eyes with a sudden flash of tears; but through their mists she saw the row of boys before the cabin and read the familiar signal—"All right"—wig-wagged by six home-braided straw hats waving in unison.

"Th' cubs! Th' wild ones!" she muttered after her lips had sent back an answering whistle. Tears splashed down upon the pinto's side and still she did not lift her bridle rein. There was a fierce fondness in her face—such a passion as shows only in the eyes of shy, quiet women who have tasted of solitude, of sorrow, and have stood the test without breaking. Her hair was a soft, even gray, matching well her large eyes, while her face, although thin, had a girlish fairness that contrasted strangely with the marks of age and toil in the stoop of her shoulders and the roughness of her hands.

"If Jim could only know how they've stood by me!" she said to herself as she turned her back upon the valley and resolutely started ahead on her quarterly trip to Moccasin, where the scanty store

supplies for the family were bought. She knew there was no time to waste if she reached her destination before dusk, and so she set herself with determination to the task of urging the logy pack horse and her own pony into a pace much beyond the inclination of the packer.

Gradually, as she plodded along the trail, the sadness faded from her eyes; but they still seemed to be dream-haunted, for occasionally they would brighten for an instant and something like a smile would play upon her lips. Although a short rifle hung from the horn of her saddle, the low harmonies which soon came from her pursed lips indicated that she was in no fear of an attack. The trills and runs of her flute-like whistle stirred into song more than one hidden warbler alongside the trail, and many a furred and pointed ear in the covert was cocked to catch the unfamiliar melody.

Only an experienced mountaineer, familiar with the trick of getting the best average of speed out of animals over a difficult and uneven mountain trail, could have made the progress which Mrs. Gray accomplished. Now she applied the whip, now she checked the animals to a slow and steady walk and occasionally halted them for a moment of entire rest. The commodore of a yacht sailing the last course of a close regatta could not have applied himself more diligently, more tactfully, to the task of making headway, than did the solitary little woman in the management of her horses.

As a result, the sun was still high when she looked from the top of a foothill upon the huddle of box-like buildings which, with their inhabitants, made up the hill-town metropolis of Moccasin.

Although the sight of an unfamiliar face or even of a human habitation other than her own cabin, was cause sufficient for keen excitement on the part of the solitary mistress of Gray's Gulch, she had no sooner dropped the bridle over the head of her pinto, in front of McBride's general store, than she became aware of expectancy and excitement uncommon even to Moccasin. The loafers were massed at the tavern, leaving the remainder of the long street comparatively deserted. Then, too, she noted an erectness in the attitude of the waiting miners, timbermen, ranchers and townsmen who stood looking up the trail from which the stage was expected.

As McBride hustled out of the store he paused to shake hands with the mountain woman and say: "Right glad t' see ye, Mrs. Gray. Couldn't have come at a better time—not in four years! Great doin's here to-night. A lady's comin' over in the stage t' make a political speech—an' chairman of the state committee wrote me that she's as smart as wild turnip an' can talk the most eloquent man in th' whole legislature right off his feet.

"Now come along t' th' hotel an' help t' welcome her, Mrs. Gray—then you're goin' t' go up t' th' house an' stay all night with us—don't say a word! When Miss Faulkner knows th' fight you've made up there in th' gulch she'll be as proud as I be of—of them boys. Can't take 'no' for an answer! There comes th' stage now!"

A few moments later found Mrs. Gray shaking hands, in a shy, constrained way, with Miss Faulkner, a tall young woman who seemed to her the most beautiful being she had ever beheld. The big brown eyes of this "political woman" were set wide apart and looked into those of her sister from the gulch with a directness, a friendliness, that seemed to assume an acquaintance of years and to say: "I know the loneliness of your life and you shall tell it to me, because I

understand and feel all that's in your heart." But what she really said—if the language of her eyes and the message of her smile were counted for silence—was simply this:

"Will you walk to the hall with me?—that is, if you have the time? I've brought some decorations to brighten up the place a little, and men are so clumsy and stupid in that kind of work that I can't bear to see them bungling about."

Even had she not realized that it would be useless to attempt to do any part of her trading that evening, the mountain woman would have been powerless to deny the request made by this marvelous being from the great outside world of civilization. As they walked towards the "opera house" Mrs. Gray's shy glance took in the minutest details of her companion's dress. For the first time, it seemed to her, she fully understood the meaning of the word fashion. Her fingers tingled at the thought of reaching out and actually touching a fabric so soft and beautiful as the silk of that waist, or the rich, heavy stuff of the skirt which fitted the strong and graceful figure of its wearer with an elegance unknown to the hill country.

No! she must not think of it—she, the solitary woman of Gray's Gulch! All dainty refinements were outside of her world. One thought of the boys back there at the cabin, waiting with such eagerness for her return, put her straight again, checked the wave of revulsion against the awful isolation of the gulch and set her "back in the trail again." Ah! but what things she would have to tell the boys!

"When I first began campaigning," said Miss Faulkner, as they entered the "opera house," "I expected the local committees to prepare things for the speaker; but I soon learned that the mountain people are poor hands at decorating. It seems as if Nature has spread such magnificence about them that they haven't any heart to attempt anything in the way of beauty with their own hands. Perhaps there's no need of it; but, somehow, I simply can't get along without something to modify the barren dullness of dirty plastered walls or plain boards.

That's why I carry that trunk—the one the driver's just left on the platform. And there's something, too, about my decorations that never fails to warm the heart of man or woman wherever I go."

Drawing a key from the purse that hung at her belt, the speaker of the day knelt beside the trunk, unlocked it and began unpacking as she continued:

"You see, I carry all the tools with me — hammer, spikes, rope — everything! But here are the beauties that always win first cheers! Just help me unfurl them, so we can——"

A sudden cry caused her to drop the flags upon the floor and turn her eyes upon the transfixed face of the mountain woman.

"Boys! boys! Th' flag—th' old flag!" were the words that came from the lips of the little woman of Gray's Gulch. Her strong, work-worn hands were outstretched towards the half-unfolded banner on the floor and the strange, ecstatic look upon her face told the quick eye of Isabel Faulkner that her companion was unconscious of words, gesture and surroundings—of all save the strong emotion that, for the moment, lifted her out of her shy self.

Instantly the younger woman was at the side of her new-found friend, one arm about her, one hand smoothing the soft gray hair that waved so playfully back over her temples.

"Tell me—tell me all about it—and let the tears come, too! No one else shall see them, and I can understand."

In a few moments the mountain woman had mastered herself enough to answer: "I—I haven't cried before since those first days after John died—not before anybody, that is!"

Isabel Faulkner had a soft, merry laugh and it was never softer than when



DRAWN BY GUSTAVUS C. WIDNEY

"Turned in the saddle and looked back across the gulch."

she brushed tears from her own eyes and spoke: "And it's years since you've had the chance to cry on a woman's shoulder. You'd better make the most of your passing privileges! But let's walk over there to the timber and get some of those running vines to help out the flags."

Not a word was spoken until they were in the deepest shade of the pines, seated side by side on a mossy log, the soft, fair hand of the younger woman gently stroking the brown, wrinkled and hardened hand of the little woman from the Gulch. Finally, under the steady rays of such sympathetic comradeship, the reserve of the woman gradually melted, like the snows of her own mountains, and she began to speak in a low, unsteady voice.

"Probably you can't understand how the sight of the flag could so upset me—not until I tell you all that's back of it—all about father, John and th' lads. I guess you'll think we're sort of heathen when I tell you that not one of my boys—there are six of them—has ever seen the flag of his country—not so much as the least little scrap of a play flag! And oh! how they've longed to! It's been a thousand times more to them—the unseen flag—than if it were a common sight to their eyes. How many, many times they've made me repeat the story of how the soldiers looked to me, as a little girl, when they came tramping back to the old home town—my father among them—bringing the tattered flags with them!

"And there's not a sunset when we sit in front of the cabin that one of the lads doesn't say: 'Well, it's time to lower th' colors.' That means a chorus of 'The Star Spangled Banner.' Do—do you like boys?"

"Like them?" answered the young woman, "why, I simply live for them! Do you think I'd be in this political work if it weren't for what I want to do for the boys of this state? Of course I care for the girls, too; but I could always get nearer to my boy pupils than to girls. And if I'm elected State Superintendent there's going to be a better chance for the boys of this state than there ever has been. That's the real motive back of what the opposition calls my 'unwomanly ambition.' But tell me about the beginning of it all."

The breathing of the wind through the pines was like a familiar voice to the mountain woman—a voice soft and near and full of sympathy. Even the smell of the earth came to her with a sense of tenderness, and before she was aware her lips were telling this wonderful young woman her story of hardship, of loneliness, of desperation, of exile from her sex, of fierce struggle against poverty and the barrenness of an unconquered wilderness.

"They had good schools in Camden, where I was born," said the woman of Gray's Gulch, her eyes fixed dreamily upon the distant mountains, "and I seemed to take naturally to books. Con-

sequently I was ready to take a school when I was almost a child in years—just sixteen. Father and mother were thrifty and comfortable, and so, for three years, I saved more than half my earnings.

"It was at the Pine Knob school that I met John Gray. He came the first day of the winter term. I can see just how he flushed up as I spoke to him the first time. When I started to enroll him and asked his age he looked down at the desk and said: 'I'm twenty—but I'm only a—' a visitor—here with the boys. I'm going to work this winter.' And so he did; but he came to the schoolhouse with the intention of being a pupil. How many times afterwards he said to me, 'It was your eyes, girl, that settled my schooling. The minute I looked into them the first time, I knew that I couldn't stand to you as a pupil—it must be something else or nothing.'

"He had always been accounted rather easy-going and careless, and when he suddenly went into lumbering on his own account the whole settlement was astounded. But, in one way, his venture accomplished its purpose; it gave him a man's standing in the community. Soon he began coming to see me and to take me to the sociables, paring-bees, and neighborhood parties.

"There wasn't much dancing in the settlement then, the feeling of the church people being rather against it, but one Friday, as he was walking home from the schoolhouse with me—it was the first time he had ever done this—he banteringly asked me to go to a house-warming at a neighboring settlement where the general sentiment was not so strong on the subject of amusements. I can hear him laugh now as he said, 'I've dared you—and you wouldn't *take a dare*, would you?'

"It was the last dance I ever went to, but I've lived it over again a thousand times since. There was something about it that seemed too wonderful, too happy, to be real. And what I saw in his eyes as we drifted together through one dance after another made me ready for—for what he said to me on the way home in the cutter. It all seemed a part of the music and the dancing.

"That was a good winter for John; his venture succeeded better than he had expected. There was only one thing that really troubled me in the new happiness of that year. Through a paper that he read, John had caught the 'western fever' and his heart was set on going to the Far West. He was sure that he would find riches there—that it was the land where abundance and fortune were waiting for all who had the courage to make the journey and face the hardships of a little pioneering.

"There was a way with him that just made you see things through his eyes, and before long I was almost as eager to become a pioneer as he—excepting when it came to leaving father and mother. They were quick to see how things were going and would often say to me: 'It's the way of the world, daughter, and likely you'll do better out there than back here in Maine.' And sometimes father would add: 'And if we're prospered here, we'll be going out there to see you. It'll do us good to see something beyond the West Woods.' We all put a brave face on it until it came to saying 'good-bye,' that week after the wedding. Suddenly it seemed to kill the heart right out of me. If I could have dreamed then that it was so far to any place on earth as from Camden to Gray's Gulch, I'd never have broken away from mother's arms and gone running down to where John was waiting for me with the team. But it's a mercy that we don't realize, at the start, how long the trails are that we're so eager to follow.

"Before we got through to these mountains it seemed to me as if we had lived all our lives in cars, on boats and in wagons and as if we were always going to go on and on and on forever. But in all of it—that is, in all save the longing for father and mother—I was happy. John was very gentle and good to me, and he was so merry and comical in the very hardest of our experiences that he robbed them of half their hurt. Again and again I hoped he was going to stop and make an end of our wanderings; but not until we reached The Gulch would he halt. I was almost frightened the night when we pitched camp there and

suddenly he said, 'This is the place, girl! I don't know why, but I feel that right here is where we're going to strike it. We'll build our cabin where the wagon stands.' And so we did. It seemed so strange to stop crawling forever forward, and so good and restful, too!

"The first baby came soon after the cabin was built and our settlement begun. When he was just a toddler the house took fire from a spark that snapped into some bedding. We saved ourselves, our clothing, a few of our household things and three books: the Bible, *Pilgrim's Progress* and *Robinson Crusoe*. Those are the only books we have ever had—the only ones my boys have ever seen. From their pages the lads have, one by one, learned to read and have gained their education.

"The babies came fast; I was never without a little one in arms. John worked hard, clearing a little more land each year, but always sticking to his original plan of doing a certain amount of prospecting. He couldn't give up the idea that he was going to find gold or silver somewhere in the gulch, although he knew nothing about mining."

For a moment Mrs. Gray stopped in her story and turned away from the young woman beside her. At length, however, she gained control of her voice and continued:

"One day, however, Clark—he is the oldest boy—came running down from the timber where he and his father were clearing, his face as white as the ashes on the hearth. He had no need to tell me; I knew it before he spoke; his father was dead—had been killed by a flying limb from a falling tree. The tragedy of the woods had overtaken us. Ah! but what a fight it's been ever since—so constant and so cruel! The older of the lads have realized that their solitary life has made them different from other boys and they have stayed in the Gulch many times when they might have come in with me to the town. And when they've come they've been as shy as young partridges."

"And quite like their mother," laughingly interrupted Miss Faulkner.

"Yes," resumed Mrs. Gray, "I sup-

pose so. They couldn't possibly be more sensitive than I am for them. The fear that they will grow up in some ways like little savages has haunted me day and night. All that I know I have taught them; but the wildness of our life comes over me when I remember that not one of them has ever seen the stars and stripes—and they the boys of a New England school teacher! I love the Gulch—every rock and tree of it—but the thought that it shall hold my lads like prisoners from all the good things of life, all the privileges of education, seems more intolerable than ever to me. Somehow, in some way, I *must* liberate them!"

"Anyhow," said the young woman, whose eyes were bright with tears, "they shall see Old Glory, for there's going to be a flag-raising if you'll let me go back with you to Gray's Gulch to-morrow. I'm so glad now that I declined the committee's request to make a Fourth of July address in Moccasin instead of speaking to-night. The best flag that I have shall float in the breezes of the Gulch so long as a Gray shall remain there to raise and lower it."

The arms of the two women were loaded with vines when they returned to the "opera house" and began the task of transforming the grim and forbidding place with the gracefully draped flags and the festoons and garlands of green. And all the time that the little mountain woman was helping her companion with the decorations her heart was beating wildly with the dreams of the joys that had been promised her for the boys that were waiting back there in the Gulch. A real flag—and such a splendid one, too!—reaching from the ceiling to the very footlights of the stage; her eyes clung to it, feasted upon it throughout the meeting. She had not been at a public gathering for fifteen years and she felt that she must not miss a word of the address or a note of the music. But, try as she might to think only of the wonderful present, her thoughts traveled far afield—now following the trail to the Gulch with her new friend, as she would on the morrow; now back in Maine at the old homestead; now pushing out into

the future and dreaming the wildest, bravest dreams of her lads and their fortunes.

She was too happy to sleep that night, and the first stealthy approach of the dawn found her smilingly awake.

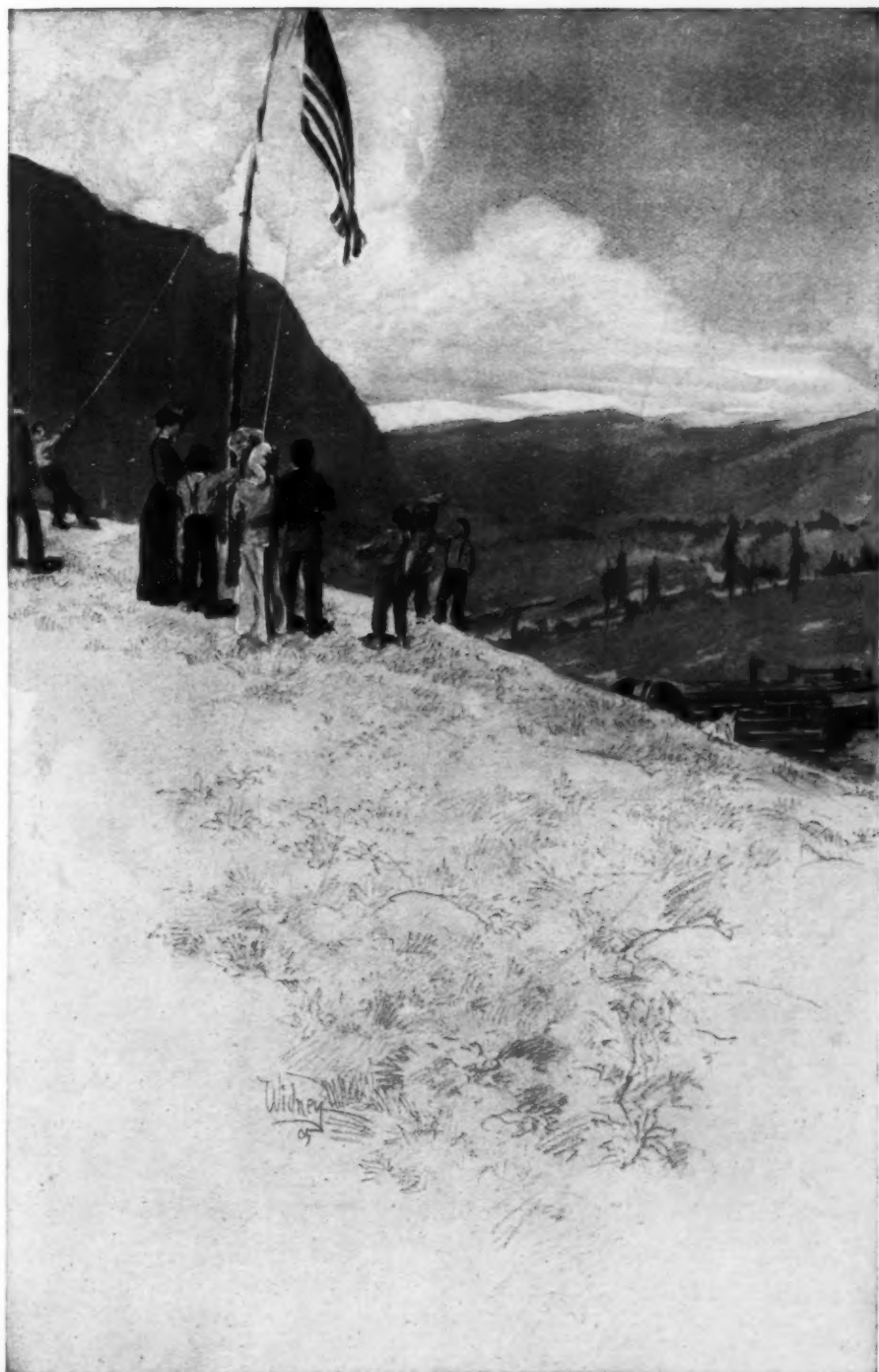
Her trading was done quickly—its volume was pitifully small—and the goods packed on the back of her animal before Isabel Faulkner had finished breakfast. The news that there was to be a flag-raising at Gray's Gulch and that the "political lady" was to be in charge of it swept through the town with the swiftness generally supposed to belong to bad tidings. But only Mrs. McBride and her husband were added to the party.

A happier cavalcade never wound its way over the trail to the lonely cañon. The home trip was easier and quicker despite the load that the pack horse carried. The sun was still two hours high when they crossed the ridge and came within sight of the cabin.

At the turn of the trail, which brought Gray's Gulch into view, the pilgrims halted and the mistress of the valley pursed her lips and sent forth a series of whistles that were echoed and reëchoed from the sides of the gulch. Silently the party waited for an answer to their leader's call. None came. Again she sounded the signal that the boys understood so well. Still no answer. A shadow of anxiety fell upon the face of the returning mother as she waited in vain for the familiar response that had been ringing in her ears all night long as she pictured, again and again, each detail of the great surprise in store for the lads and the boyish rapture with which they would receive it.

Once more the lips formed for the call and sounded it with a shrillness that carried it far beyond the cabin or the remotest nook of the gulch. As she listened intently for an answer—her eyes fixed on the little cabin which gave no sign of life—a fringe of white touched her trembling lips.

But suddenly from the thicket that covered the face of the crag beside which the little company was halted, came a chorus of "Indian yells" that almost stampeded the horses. And what



DRAWN BY GUSTAVUS C. WIDNEY

"The banner was slowly hoisted."

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laughter and noise followed as the six youngsters scrambled down from their ambush and made a quick prisoner of the mountain woman, who had already dismounted so that she might the better receive the "bear hugs" of her captors!

But the instant the tide of their welcome to the returning mother had expended itself, their shyness in the presence of strangers asserted itself and they would, perhaps, have disappeared into the brush had they not, in turn, been captured.

"Lads!" exclaimed the little mother, "I've brought you a great secret—that is, these friends of ours have—and we'll sit right down here beside the trail while I tell you about it. I just can't keep it a single minute longer!"

Quickly she told the story of her meeting with Miss Faulkner, of hanging the flags across the stage of the "opera house," of the friendship so quickly formed with the "lady who likes boys," and then said:

"And now, lads, there's going to be a flag-raising at Gray's Gulch—a real flag, as big and as beautiful as any that I ever saw in the hands of a color-bearer returning from the war, when I was a little girl. And it's to be yours, always!"

Instantly the boys leaped to their feet, danced, yelled and threw their hats in a delirium of delight.

"But, boys," interrupted Miss Faulkner, "it's a big flag, like the one they have at posts and forts, and we must have a strong staff to fly it from."

"I know!" exclaimed Clark, the eldest of the lads, pointing to a solitary slender little pine that crowned the *mesa* a few hundred yards beyond the cabin. "We'll strip it and hoist the flag there."

"For to-night, yes," answered the young woman, "but to-morrow we must cut a staff and set it on the knoll, in front of the cabin, just as if it were a regular army post. That will give us two flag-raising instead of one."

One moment the commander of the future garrison looked into the mother's face, and reading there a message of consent to the proposed plans, leaped down the trail followed by the three "seniors" of the sextet.

Before the cavalcade had reached the cabin the advance party of experienced little woodsmen had begun the attack upon "the lookout pine" that sent its branches shivering to the ground and transformed it from a graceful plume of green into a staff, bare save for the spurs of branches that were left to form a ladder by which to carry up the rope that was to fly the colors.

Without stopping at the cabin, the little caravan continued straight up the slope until the *mesa* was reached. The pack was quickly removed from the back of the packer and the jolly storekeeper deftly unfolded it until he came to a certain package.

"Here's th' tackle, boys," he said. "Now scamper up and fasten this end to the tip of your tree and then we can run th' colors up and down, by th' pulley, as easy as a squirrel's jump!"

And a squirrel could scarcely have run up the dismantled tree more nimbly than Roland, the second boy, who claimed his turn in the splendid ceremony. There was much laughter at his nimbleness; but a sudden hush fell upon the group as his feet touched ground, and all the company, by common impulse, formed in a circle about "the lady of the flag" (as she was ever after called by her mountain friends) while she slowly unwrapped the big flat package that Mr. McBride handed to her.

The movements of her fingers were followed with a reverent intensity by the eyes of six young Americans who were, in the next instant, to look for the first time upon the flag of their country. Instinctively every head was uncovered, and the stillness was so profound that the wildly-sweet call of a hermit thrush was heard from the swaying tip of a pine on the other slope of the gulch.

"Boys," said the young woman before she uncovered the banner, "there are thousands of Americans who have seen the Stars and Stripes from the time they were born, who love the old flag less than you who have never looked upon it. No matter how many may prove unworthy of it and of all for which it stands, I know that the boys of Gray's Gulch will stand by the flag in their hearts and in

their lives. The boys of this mother could never be anything but American patriots of the truest sort."

For a moment she could say no more; her voice was choked and her eyes were flooded with tears. Putting her arm about the shoulders of the lad nearest to her, she finally continued:

"It's a dear and a costly flag to me. I had a brother who fell with it at San Juan Hill. The flag came back, and with it the stories that comrades told of his bravery; but my lad will never return."

Quickly the banner was made ready, and the hoisting line placed in the hands of little Hubert. Slowly he pulled, and with the backward steps that he took, the voices of the company raised the song:

"Oh, say, can you see by the dawn's early light,
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming,
Whose broad stripes and bright stars through the perilous fight,
O'er the ramparts we watched, were so gallantly streaming?
And the rockets' red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there.
Oh, say, does the star-spangled banner yet wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?"

Not in camp or on battlefield was this splendid hymn to the colors ever sung with a sublimer glow of love for country than by this little band of mountain people as the banner was slowly hoisted to the head of the staff, where the breeze swung it free from its standard in graceful billows of color that made the hearts of the boys leap with a strange and fierce excitement.

The guests were given the cabin that night, and a tepee—half wigwam, half tent—was put up for the shelter of the mother and her boys. With maternal tact she managed that each boy should

have his chance for a quiet word with her before they slept.

"Girl!" said the eldest, as they sat together by the spring after all the others were asleep, "how old does a boy have to be to go to war and fight for his country? And is there any war now—any that soldiers are needed for?"

"Not the kind of war or of soldiers you mean, lad. But the fight for better



DRAWN BY GUSTAVUS C. WIDNEY

"A pan! a pan!"

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things is going on everywhere, and that's where I want to see every one of you have an opportunity to show yourselves soldiers. Oh! but what kind of a chance do any of you have 'way out here in the Gulch, with no one but me to teach you? Sometimes it seems as if the longing to give my boys the show that other boys have would break——"

The lad's brown hand closed tightly upon her smaller one and he said:

"Never mind, Girl! Somehow it'll all come out right. Anyway, I'll see to it that the younger ones don't miss it. We'll give them their show!"

The dawn of Independence Day was glorious with all the beauty that ever graces a morning in the mountains. The guests were aroused from their sleep by the discharge of a rifle, and the storekeeper from Moccasin exclaimed to his wife, "There goes the sunrise gun. I'll bet every native of Gray's Gulch is up there hoisting the colors!" And a glance out of the door showed the flag waving grandly to the top of its rock-rooted standard.

Before noon Mr. McBride and the elder trio of the boys who had disappeared up the trail, with the horses in harness, came back to the cabin, shaking a long, slender staff that had been stripped of bark and boughs.

"Now," said the merchant, "comes the hard work of the job. I've set many a telegraph pole, and dug hundreds of prospect holes, but I've never yet found any poetry in swinging a pick or working a shovel in th' heat of th' day!"

"You just tell us how an' we'll do all the work," said Clark, seizing the pick and waiting for the storekeeper to point the place where the flagstaff should be set.

Seating himself on a rude, home-made stool that he took from the cabin door, the old prospector settled down to direct affairs and watch the young mountaineer show his muscle.

"Sink her right there!" he exclaimed, tossing a stone to indicate the spot where the staff was to stand.

After the ground had been broken by the pick the two other "seniors" were ready with shovels, and plied them with

as much skill and energy as Clark had handled the pick.

"Ah! it's good for the young rascals!" he was saying to the women who were sitting together on the long hewn log that formed the doorstep of the cabin. "They'd do great work with a construction gang, Mrs. Gray, great work!"

Suddenly his manner changed as his eye fell upon the little mound that was growing under the busy shovels. Quickly stepping to the heap, he bent over it, motioning the boys to stop shoveling.

"A pan! A pan!" he called, reaching out his hand without taking his eyes from the mound. An instant later he was at the stream with a pan full of the dirt. There was a moment of suspense and then he shouted wildly, dropping into his vernacular, as he always did under great excitement.

"Woman! Woman! It's gold! Ye've struck it—big! Big! There's not the loikes of such diggin's in all th' range. It is ye that can build colleges an' buy diamonds fer yer lads now! Th' old flag 'll have t' float from th' pine—but we'll put down some stakes here instead, boys. John Gray's dream has come true at last—God bless him!"

And this is how the Flagstaff Camp, one of the richest in all the great Northwest, was opened up in Gray's Gulch. The cabin has been carefully removed from the "diggin's" to a place safe from disturbance by the miners' pick, higher up the mountain, close beside the "look-out pine" from which still floats the flag that was raised that happy Fourth of July. And Mrs. Gray's dreams of "doing for the lads" have come true in a measure that still seems to her marvelous beyond belief.

The Nymph

BY ETHEL SIGSBEE SMALL

"There is a nymph in my garden," said Channing.

"Where?" said I, and upset Channing's dog in my eagerness.

"Not now, naturally—in broad daylight," said Channing, resuming his lazy puffing. If a sleek, well-fed blond creature, with florid complexion and sun-burnt hair, can be said to look mysterious, then Channing did.

"Well, why didn't you say so?" I asked rather coldly. I know of nothing that makes a man feel smaller and more foolish than making a break to see something which isn't there to be seen—unless it is chasing a hat.

"She walks," said Channing, fixing absent eyes on nothing, his drawl more pronounced and more provoking than ever; "she walks at dawn."

"Needless to say, you walk at dawn also. What's her name?"

Channing's eyes came back from vacancy to fix me with a patient stare.

"Nymphs have no names," he said gently, in the tone one might adopt toward a tiny and rather tiresome child. "Nymphs live in trees; nymphs haunt dewy glades; nymphs weave clover chains, and dance with the breeze as partner; but nymphs"—he reiterated patiently—"have no names."

"Rot!" I remarked forcefully. But Channing was off in space again. "Is she pretty? If you're bound to be an idiot, be the entertaining kind. Describe, embellish, particularize, bedeck! In the language of the drama—'Proceed; your story interests me.'"

"She has brown hair," said Channing; "most nymphs, I believe, have yellow, but hers is brown. It is long—very long, and usually pours mad-cap about her shoulders, a tumbled chestnut mass. Sometimes, though, it is braided, two long, brown ropes that hang quite to her knees. As I have only seen her from a distance"—I snorted, but Channing was miles away—"I cannot tell the color of her eyes, but they seem large and set widely. Her skin is most wonderful."

"Concerning this skin, now—this most wonderful skin, might I ask—how much—er—that is, does she?—or rather, doesn't she? You see, nymphs usually don't."

"Her arms," said Channing, quite as if I were nowhere in the vicinity, "are very white, and her throat is lovely." I sat up in pleasant expectancy. "They peep from the shimmering green of her drapery"—"Oh," I said, and leaned back again—"and are lost ever and anon in the sweep of its voluminous folds. She has an innocent, primitive air that makes one long to—"

"Kiss her?" I suggested.

"Question her," said Channing sternly, "about her mode of life, the manners and methods of her people, but most of all to ask her why she goes through that most peculiar pantomime."

"What most peculiar pantomime? On my word, Channing, you get on my nerves with these jumps of yours! A moment ago it was skin, now it's pantomime. Go on, and try to talk a little faster. It won't hurt you."

"At dawn," said Channing, "just when the earliest rays of the sun can find her, she appears."

"Yes, so you said. Then—"

"Her garments are always green, and she seems to rise from the grasses and to be in some way a part of them as she advances."

"Couldn't you cut all that?" I asked wistfully. "I know you're an author and descriptions are as meat and drink to you, but remember I'm only a plain, every-day newspaper man. It's all lost on me. You're casting pearls—simply throwing them away. Now, get on if you can, old man. I know being an author handicaps you, but brace up! Make an effort!"

"She advances," said Channing, "slowly; peering here and there with timid gaze, as if fearing the shock of sighting a mortal. On, shyly, furtively she comes until she reaches that great oak

where the grass is thickest. There she bares her white arms and sinks them in the green at her feet. This done, she buries her face in her hands as though weeping. For a time she stands thus, then back as she came, still timid, still furtive, until finally she—vanishes; into the grass, inside a tree, up to the blue ether, somewhere—nowhere. Then I rub my eyes and go back to bed.”

“Oh, so it’s a dream!” I said, disgusted. “I’ve known fellows to do that before; get you all worked up over some Munchausen sort of thing, then grin and say they dreamed it. Some consider this the quintessence of wit.”

“Nothing of the kind,” said Channing warmly. I was glad to see him back again, and tried to keep him.

“Dreams are wonderfully real, some of them,” I said pleasantly; “I used to dream of a little Spanish dancer. If I had that dream six times I had it two dozen. She always came, smiling and radiant, up to me, presented me with a blueberry dumpling, and snatched it away again before I could get it in my fingers. It was always the same—same dancer, same blueberry dumpling; she even wore the same dress, a lot of red and black sparkles. It was a very sad dream.”

“David,” said Channing, “don’t be an ass.”

“What’s that for?” I asked. “Wasn’t it a dream?”

“No. And now I’ll tell you why I told you all this.”

“Do, old boy. You’re not usually so generous with your plots—as a rule it’s pay our little money and read it in the magazine; not that I do, of course. Speak on.”

“First,” said Channing, “I haven’t told you all.”

“Aha!” I cried, in triumph, “then you *did* go a-walking in the dawn!”

“Confound you, David!—I did; not walking, either—that is—it was this way—”

“And remember you don’t get paid by space rates,” I suggested.

“One morning,” said Channing, “the sixth after her first appearance, I made up my mind to go down and speak to her.”

“Lord help you!” I murmured, “I’m only a poor newspaper man, but I think I could have gone you better by five mornings.”

“It was this way,” said Channing, quite quickly—that is for Channing. He sat up and stopped smoking. If I had not known Channing I should have said he was excited. “I reasoned it this way: ‘I like this girl. Even at this distance, when I have only seen her, I am peculiarly drawn to her. I have never been drawn to any woman like that. How am I to know her? She vanishes in her mysterious little way, and try as I will I cannot see where. How am I to know her? Then, she is in my garden, and I have the right to walk in my own garden at dawn if it pleases me.’ Finally I made up my mind; but it was not without going over the matter in its every particular; it was not without duly discussing both sides, for and against, and looking at the situation from every view-point. There was no haste about it.”

“No, I’ll bet there wasn’t!” I muttered rudely.

“I was so excited about it I could scarcely sleep. I lay half the night wondering should I dare when morning came. Six times I rose and walked to the window to see if there were any signs of rain. She never comes when it is raining. I got so nervous about it that when I finally slept, fitfully and light, I dreamed of a shower and woke in an agony of despair at what I thought was the pattering of water on the roof, but was only the vines tap-tapping at the pane. Finally I woke again, long before dawn, and could not go to sleep.”

I looked hard at Channing. I began to think I had made a mistake and that Jack Dareday was talking. It sounded like the preamble to one of Jack’s finest. But no, it was Channing—sleek, well-fed old Channing.

“I dressed by gas-light and sat by the window waiting for the day. It bid fair to be a perfect one. The stars faded, and a little breeze awoke, then the birds, then the flowers, and at last a faint, far flush in the eastern sky. She was later than usual that morning. The sun was well up before I saw her.”

Here Channing abruptly halted again. If a man only knew the fool he looks sitting stark still, with pipe ashes sifting softly over him, as he gazes, calf-eyed, into space! One thing is clear, he'd shoot himself, with pleasure. I was about to communicate this thought to Channing when he suddenly went on.

"I can't begin to tell you how beautiful she looked that morning——"

"What color were her eyes?" I asked.

"I stood at the window watching her for a long while, wondering at her beauty. So long a time, indeed, I came near losing her, for she had finished her pantomime and Vanishing Time was close at hand. So, you see, I might have lost her."

"Served you right, you old mooner," I said. When Channing goes into one of his reveries you can call him what you like. It doesn't trouble him, because he's past hearing.

"However, I didn't!" and here I am ashamed to say Channing turned on me a visage radiating smiles and blushed like a girl. I frowned on him, but he only dimpled deeper. It was plain to be seen he was past all earthly aid. "I bounded downstairs and out into the garden. The air was rare, and keen, and light, as it is very early in the morning; full of——"

"My God, man, spare us the air!" I cried passionately. I was fairly put out with Channing.

"Every flower held its diamond," said Channing, reminiscently, "every blade was crusted deep with gems."

And here I took occasion to philosophize to Channing's dog.

"Never let an author talk to you, my boy," I told him; "read him—if you like—but draw the line at conversation. There's no skipping when he talks." The poor brute whined as plainly as words: "Lord! don't I know that as well as you do? But how am I going to help it?" I never knew until that moment what it must be to be a dog—and Channing's.

Channing talked right on, and the dog and I exchanged some further confidences. When I finally gave Channing my attention again, three detailed descriptions of flowers, trees and sky were past, and he



DRAWN BY JOHN CLITHEROE GILBERT

"At dawn, just when the earliest rays of the sun can find her, she appears."

was where I wanted him—bounding up to the lady.

"You see," said Channing, "I was so afraid I would lose her—that she would run away before I reached her, vanish into mist before my eyes. And so I came upon her rather suddenly. I suppose I must have frightened her." His idiotic smiles had faded into an expression of utter dejection.

"Go on," I said, "I'm not a medium—what did she do?"

"She screamed," said Channing. "She died" could not have been uttered more funeally. "She screamed, and ran."

"You after her!" I was growing excited. Even Channing's dog scented the chase and raced about the room, barking nervously.

"Not at all," said Channing. The dog lay down again. I am sure he felt as I did. "Not at all," repeated Channing; "I stood quite still and looked after her."

"I confess I am surprised you did not run in the opposite direction," I remarked.

"Just once in her flight she paused," Channing went on despondently. "She looked back once, only once—just a swift little glance—and my impression was of having looked into the heart of a rose, so pink had grown her face. When she saw me, still gazing, she stamped a tiny foot, and pointed an imperious finger in my direction. Then I heard her voice. It was soft and quite low, but it carried. I think she said 'beast.'"

"More likely 'coward,'" I said scornfully, "and darned right, too. Of all the chuckleheads—"

"I suddenly realized what she must mean. She was quite airily attired, and I was staring, staring my eyes out—my heart, too, maybe. When I understood I turned my gaze away. And when I looked again she had—vanished!"

"I hope," I said sternly, "you aren't expecting any sympathy. You won't get it. I won't say all I think—I doubt if there are words in which to express it. But what about the second meeting?"

"I have not seen her since," said Channing simply.

"Not seen her!" I cried. "She has ceased to play in your yard? This is all

you've got to tell? Look here, Channing, this is a little too much. I've listened patiently to your pointless old tale—thinking all the time that if I gave you long enough you'd reach a climax. If the yarns you write aren't any better than the ones you tell, Heaven help the public! What was it all *for*, anyway?"

Channing stretched his arm out on the slender arm of his chair, the pipe hanging limply in his fingers.

"That's what I wonder," he said softly.

I whistled to the dog. There is a limit to human endurance. The hazy expression left Channing's face.

"Wait a moment, Davy," he said impulsively. I turned in the doorway and glowered at him.

"Come back; I want you to help me, you know."

"Help you?—what the devil!—*help* you?"

"Yes, to find her. He turned a gloom-shadowed countenance to mine. "I'm no end miserable, Davy," he said.

"I am not a sleuth, Channing," I said. "I never Sherlocked a case in my life, but I'm willing to begin. Tell me anything about the case you know."

But Channing began a description of how the sun looked on her hair, or how her hair looked in the sun, so I saw I would have to question him.

"What was her costume? Describe it—no floral tributes, please; plain newspaper style."

"It was green," said poor Channing, trying not to get hazy, "and loose and flowing. When she moved there were more draperies underneath—white, clinging ones. I did not notice her feet until she ran, and then I saw they were thrust into little green things without heels. And if she wore stockings they were white."

"That last is most important," I said, seriously.

"The green of her gown was a beautiful apple shade that brought out her white, white skin with astonishing fairness—"

"Never mind about the white, white skin," I said. "Now tell me about the pantomime."

"She first drew up her long, loose sleeves," said Channing, "until her arms were bare nearly to the shoulders. Then, with the most graceful little gesture in the world, she sank them deep into the grasses. Afterwards she buried her face in her hands and wept—or seemed to weep."

"Did she do this but once, each time she came?" I asked.

"No, often twice—sometimes three times."

"Ah, yes," I said, in the manner of sages.

"You think you see?" asked Channing eagerly. "Has any light come?"

"A luminosity," I said grandly, "equal, I should say, to sixteen candle-power. I am going to take it out with me for a stroll—with it we may accomplish something—and I am going to take Porpoise, too, if you don't want him."

"I don't want him," said Channing. "By George, Davy, discover my nymph and I'll—I'll give you anything!"

"The nymph?" I suggested.

"Bar only the nymph," said Channing.

Porpoise and I strolled out upon the highroad. There was the garden, first, to pass through; a grand old colony of oaks and elms, with here and there a poplar like a huge green wave capped lavishly with foam. So old and deep and grass-entangled was that garden, there might have been a dozen nymphs concealed amid its beauties. But we saw nothing, nothing but a rose with a sweet, pink face, and a blue bird watching, bright-eyed, from a tree.

So Porpoise and I strolled out upon the highroad, and while he scampered and skipped and sang—for he is not at all what his name implies; he won and deserved that appellation as a baby—I thought over all I had been told of Channing's nymph and tried to see my way to her.

One thing was certain; she did not live far. No one, even a nymph, would care to walk any distance in the filmy garments Channing had described. Then one point was solved—she lived near. There was a small hotel on one side of Channing's place, and a modest, green-trimmed cottage on the other. I don't know why—certainly the nymph had done

nothing to deserve it—but I chose the modest one. The nymph was residing there, I decided. She was visiting her maiden aunt. When I reflected that I was a stranger to both ladies, and that maiden aunts—probably in a sour grapes spirit—make ardent chaperons, the game took on excitement. Porpoise and I, being more than common brave, resolved to take the fortress by storm.

The maiden aunt answered my knock—there was no bell. After the preliminary rattling of chains, sliding of bolts and creaking of rusted hinges that attend the opening of the front door in most New England villages, she stood before me, a fair example of the New England spinster, tall, lean, wrinkled, quite toothless, and scanty-haired—perhaps I should have said "plain" instead of "fair" example.

"May I see your niece, if you please?" I asked. My manner was perfection. There was in it deference, a certain old world chivalry, yet withal a suggestion of "youth to youth." I did not smile. If she had no teeth I should at least not fling her the fact that I had.

"Yow!" was all the lady said.

I confess I was nonplused for a moment, until I saw the stump of Porpoise's tail emerging from the folds of her skirt. I called him to me to apologize.

"He is only friendly—only extremely social," I assured her graciously.

"Only a blood-thirsty varmint," said the lady with emotion, and got behind the door. I was still favored with the tip of a generous nose and one eyebrow, however.

"Now, speak quick!" she commanded, sternly.

Of all maddening words, to be told to "speak quick" is the maddeningest. I took a mental oath to let Channing drawl his head off in future if he wanted to.

"Madam," I said, "you have a niece, and I should like to speak to her." This was surely as plain as the lady's face, but she still eyed me with suspicion.

"I ain't got no niece," she said sharply, but I thought her voice trembled a little. It was clear she was concealing something.

"Oh, I'm sure you have," I said, in a

benevolent policeman manner; "come now, go and call her."

"I ain't," said the lady.

"You ain't got a niece, or you ain't going to call her?" I asked politely; "or both?"

"John!" called the lady, in a shrill, tremulous treble.

I relished the appearance of a man on the scene, but no man seemed forthcoming.

"P'r'aps you think there ain't any men folks in this house. P'r'aps you think there ain't nobody here but me. But there is—there's lots of men folks. Harry!"

Then Porpoise began to call, too. He is a kindly dog, always ready to be of service to a lady.

"You step outen that doorway!" cried the lady shrilly; "and you take that black snake of a dog with you!"

I confess I was surprised and not a little hurt.

"Why—madam——"

"Git!"

The Porpoise cast a reproachful glance at her and obeyed, for he is the most sensitive of creatures. I thought it best to follow him. She was still shrieking to a chimerical Harry as we went down the road.

"I feel sure there are no nymphs there,

Porpoise," I observed, as we walked along the highway, "but even if there were, I do not think we should go again. No, something tells me we should not go again—not for a thousand nymphs, Porpoise." Porpoise barked with feeling rare in an animal.

"Still I really believe the nymph is not there. What do you believe, Porpoise?"

Porpoise suggested that the lady herself might have been the nymph. I thought this gallant of him, considering her treatment, but I admonished him none the less. If a dog entertains such a poor idea of his master's taste he should at least have the good form to keep it to himself.

"No doubt we shall find the Lady of the Green Draperies in the inn, Porpoise," I said. But Porpoise looked far from hopeful, and to tell the truth I was a little discouraged myself.

There was residing at Seacrest Inn—I don't know why "Seacrest," possibly because there was a brook at Middleborough three miles distant—a certain Miss Marian Hastings. I had met Marian—I always call girls by their first names to myself; it gives one a sense of easy comradeship toward the sex which in their presence I am far from feeling—I had



DRAWN BY JOHN CLITHEROE GILBERT

"May I see your niece, if you please?"

met Marian at a garden party the summer before and had formed a violent dislike for her. The feeling was entirely mutual.

I called two evenings after my heroic charge on Green Cottage. I wore white flannels and a buttonhole, and tried to think I looked lovely.

Miss Hastings's look of horror as I approached would have frozen a man engaged on any less worthy mission than a nymph hunt. First horror, then as I smiled and bowed and sat down beside her, a look of patient suffering before which the angels might have wept. I have seen that expression on the faces of martyrs in old paintings.

"Why, I thought you'd left town!" she said. Her tone implied a personal injury.

"Why, no—I thought you had."

We talked in this strain for an hour. Marian was beginning to grow faint, but I was adamant. Finally she rose sternly and led me to a group of girls fluttering like butterflies at one end of the piazza. There were wholesale introductions and, the conversation fairly launched, Marian basely deserted me. A moment later I saw her slipping down the walk with a young man who was gesticulating furiously.

I passed a very pleasant evening. The one other man having been captured by Miss Hastings, I suppose I came in the nature of a windfall. At least they made much of me. I was, metaphorically speaking, embraced, caressed, and fawned upon. There was adoration in the very air. Any one of them would have been a feast—and there were seventeen.

I think I forgot Channing for a little while, but I remembered in time to give each one a careful scrutiny. Many of them had nice, white skins, quite half were blessed with wide-set eyes, and all but one had thick, brown hair. It was a good deal perplexing.

The odd one, by the way, was a stunner! Great mop of coppery hair, gray-green eyes, and cheeks like peaches. When she laughed it was warm, soft, bright laughter—like sunshine on a tumbly brook. Her teeth made you think of the pebbles; little white, smooth, round things. They were all nice girls, but I

couldn't help thinking a *tête-à-tête* with Number 17 would have gone excellently well.

I left shortly after midnight and they escorted me to the gate. Then all seventeen gave me a flower, embraced me, kissed me, and begged me to come again (the first and last actually; the others still metaphorically speaking). I experienced a few of the sensations of a Mormon and found them wholly enjoyable. Still, Number 17 would have shone like a star alone.

I called on Channing the next morning.

"Oh, by the way," I said, "you aren't out of that nymph notion yet, are you?"

"Out of it?" said Channing; "I'm getting worse in, I'm afraid. But what's the matter? Getting discouraged, Davy?"

"No, oh, no," I said largely, "not at all—quite the contrary; in fact, I shall probably drag her in shrieking and lay her at your feet to-morrow. You can wait till to-morrow, can't you?"

"Yes, I can wait," said Channing, in a voice that implied he couldn't; "but, Davy, for Heaven's sake, when you do find her, remember she's a nice girl and you're to treat her accordingly. That 'drag her in shrieking' is a joke, of course, but I don't like the sound of it."

"Not at all a joke," I said. "Aren't nymphs wild things? Don't they have to be captured? Did you suppose I would only have to point to you to have her come running? Of course she'll be dragged. Of course she'll scream. That's where my fun comes in."

"David, be still," said Channing. "Now tell me something of your discoveries. Show me the threads and tell me how you propose to draw them together. What is her name?—where does she live?"

"Nymphs don't have names," I said, "and she lives in a tree—her mother's a dryad. Am I running my own case, or are you doing it for me? She will be here to-morrow. I shall tell you nothing."

I did not add that I had nothing to tell, and left somewhat abruptly.

On my way to my rustic retreat—I was visiting my sister-in-law that summer

—I passed Number 17. She was pinker than ever, and her hair made a sort of dull glow about her face. She beamed, and the pebbles twinkled, but I kept on. I was really worried. To-morrow loomed near and terrible. Until I had found Channing's nymph I would have none of my own.

My mail was waiting for me on the hall table; a newspaper, a bill, and—nothing more. I laid the bill in the table drawer between two heaps of old visiting cards, and opened the paper. It was an old one, dated a month back; one I had ordered sent from the office. I found the story I wanted and read it, then read several others—for to a newspaper man there is nothing quite so enthralling as a newspaper, be it fresh from the press or come home wrapped about one's laundry—then I paused before a small paragraph on the Woman's Page. Now, I do not read the Woman's Page, be it distinctly known. All else I devour, even to the "ads," but the Woman's Page I pass by as firmly as Bluebeard meant Fatima to pass the forbidden door. But to-day this paragraph caught my eye.

I read it, I read it twice, I read it three times. Then I tossed the paper in the air; I laughed, I sang, I capered, I whistled until my sister-in-law sent down the icy message that I had "waked the baby." But what cared I? Usually as fond a cherisher of an infant's slumbers as of my own, I now but laughed the harder. Let him howl! Little cared I! To my ears it would sound like a victorious jubilation!

After the first excitement had abated somewhat, I cut out the paragraph carefully and put it in my pocket. If it had been the nymph herself, neatly curled up, that I was bestowing there, I could not have been more certain of her.

There was a knot of girls gathered together in the moonlight, whispering, fluttering, twittering, like a flock of birds. They broke and scattered as my step rang on the hotel porch, but it was only to fly toward me. Down in a shadowy corner I could faintly discern the outline of a girl's form and a man's beside it. As a count was all that was needed to convince me all of my seventeen were here, I con-

cluded the girl must be Marian. I reflected I had much to be thankful for. Then we all sat down, but I managed to be next to Number 17.

I was excited. It was not alone the presence of my coppery girl—and sixteen nearly like her—but the thought of the discovery I was on the eve of making. I cast a laughing look about the circle; one of them was Channing's nymph, and in my pocket lay the key to her. The spirit of detective and adventurer was hot upon me. I felt even reconciled to the losing of one of my peerless seventeen.

I laughed and talked with more than my common ease and vivacity that evening. I could feel the gray-green eyes of my copper-tinted girl admiringly upon me—and thirty-two other eyes of assorted colors and sizes. In my security of inevitable victory I put off the fateful moment. With the fish on the hook, why hasten? With the mouse in my paws, why not play?

So it was well on toward going-home time before I drew out my clipping.

"Here's something I want you to read, girls," I said with careless ease. "No, don't snatch—one at a time; you first, please."

They read it one after another; the moonlight falling white on the printed slip, and the pretty head bent above it. There were various exclamations, according to each girlish nature:

"How queer!"

"I never heard *that* before!"

"Do you think it's true?"

"It's perfectly silly—I don't believe it!"

"May I make a copy?"

"I'm going to begin to-morrow!"

"I wonder if *that's* the reason Mr. Jackson is so good-looking?" And then a silver shower of giggles.

So finally my paper was handed back to me, the conversation veered, and I was forced to the mental and ignominious admission that I had played my trump card and it was worth absolutely nothing! Then I remembered Number 17.

She was sitting quietly awaiting her turn, her lovely head resting against the pillar behind her.

"But no," I thought, jealously, "it



DRAWN BY JOHN CLITHEROE GILBERT

"She was sitting like one in a trance."



DRAWN BY JOHN CLITHEROE GILBERT

"There were wholesale introductions."

can't be she; the nymph had dark hair—
anyway she's mine—Channing can't have
everything. No, I'll be hanged if I do!
Well— Have you seen the clipping,
Miss Desmond?"

She read it, smiled incredulously, made
some light comment and passed it back
to me. I had not yet found the nymph
—but, by Jubilate! I was thankful.

Then a little girl on the out-

skirts stretched out a tiny palm. "You haven't shown it to me," she said.

She was a slender little thing; slender, but quite tall, with a pale, pretty face. I handed her the slip. Just then Number 17 demanded my attention. A June-bug had become entangled in her hair, and it was my pleasure and privilege to release him. It was a full minute before I remembered the slender little girl. When I looked up she was sitting like one in a trance; her cheeks ablaze, her eyes shining out at space, her lips smilingly reminiscent.

I did not trouble her then, but as I left I shot a passing sally.

"He has been up at dawn for two weeks now," I said very low, into her ear.

"Oh!" said the little maid, and vanished. She told me afterwards that she ran into the house. But I hold, with Channing, that she possessed the power of invisibility.

"I wish I knew where I have seen you before," I managed to whisper to Number 17, as we all went down to the gate; and what is more important, I managed to catch her hand.

"I've been wishing the same thing," said Number 17, faintly, and the hand drew away, but so slowly it was almost as if it had stayed.

"Good night!" I said to all seventeen, as I passed out into the highroad.

"Good night!" they all called back.

They were nice girls! It seems almost a pity our laws regarding matrimony are so conservative.

So now all that remained was to see Channing; and if I swaggered a little no one could blame me.

"She's yours," I said forcefully and briefly. Then I showed him the clipping and explained.

"But how mine?" asked Channing, like the modest creature he is.

"Go over and call—you'll see," I said.

"Alone—all alone?" gasped Channing.

"I'll go with you," I said soothingly.

"You're no end of a trump," said Channing. "After all you've done, too, it's selfish of me to ask it."

"That's all right," I said nobly; "glad

to help you. And in case it makes you feel too badly, I don't mind telling you I'm going to marry one of the seventeen myself. She's a little Spanish dancer—copper-colored hair—stunning fig——"

"An actress!" said Channing. "My dear Davy!"

"Oh, no," I said virtuously. "Her father is a clergyman. But she is my little Spanish dancer none the less. I met her in a dream, if you remember. I'm going to ask her to-night if she likes blueberry dumpling."

We strolled down toward Seacrest, Porpoise in the middle. At the gate Channing collapsed.

"Do you think there's any chance for me?" he asked wildly.

"Chance for you!" I said contemptuously. "Is there any chance for a polar bear on an iceberg? Any chance for a mouse near cheese?" Then I despaired. After all, how make him understand the ardent, worshipful natures of my loving seventeen? He should see for himself. I led him in.

For all Channing's contempt for newspaper style, he none the less cherishes a clipping from the despised columns. The clipping was a gift from me. It is short, and I hope I can write better, and it was culled from the Woman's Page, yet he thinks the world of it. It reads:

"If one wishes to improve a poor complexion or beautify and preserve a good one, there is no better recipe than the following:

"In the morning, early, before the sun has dried the jewels on the grass, go out. Do not wait to dress, otherwise you may be too late, but slip a kimono over your night-dress, bedroom shoes on your bare feet and run out. No one will see you at this hour. Nature and you will be alone.

"Plunge the hands into the dew-wet grasses, then press them to the face. Do not rub—this sometimes irritates. Your reward will be an added knowledge of Nature at her freshest and loveliest, and a perfect complexion, rosy as Aurora, which every woman—etc., etc.'"

Rajah and the Samaritan

BY MARJORIE BENTON COOKE

Mr. Wayne Wallbright sat back in Section 7 and sighed out of the depths of his boredom. Certainly nothing could be duller than the trip from New York to Chicago, with a pleasant companion and under the pleasantest circumstances, but now—here an inspection of his fellow passengers showed that he need cherish no hopes of amusement from that source. Every section was full, and Wallbright cursed his luck that he had been too late to get a stateroom, and so spare himself twenty-four hours' steady view of the fat, vapid, or ugly faces about him. Thank heaven! he had the section to himself anyhow. The train began to pull out, and he was roused from his disgust by a feminine voice saying:

"But, porter, you *must* get me a seat as far as Albany. I certainly can't stand up all the way."

He turned and found himself on his feet, hat in hand.

"Won't you take my seat until the porter gets things straightened out? I was just going into the smoking car."

"Oh, thanks; but don't let me drive you away."

"Not at all."

"You're very kind."

He picked up his papers and left her in possession, conscious that his "kindness" was due rather to her extraordinary attractiveness than to any innate virtue of his own. But once settled in the smoker, he regretted his haste. He couldn't read, and the loud-toned discussion of trusts by two bibulous traveling salesmen made him cross. He wished he hadn't let his gallantry run away with him. He hoped the porter had got the woman settled. He'd go back and claim his share of the seat, anyhow. And back he marched.

He found "the woman" comfortably established, with innumerable belongings spread out all over his section—a huge thing that looked like a champagne basket on the seat beside her, and bags and wraps on the seat opposite. At his

arrival she looked up with a smile of such alleviating qualities that he almost forgot his wrath.

"There doesn't seem to be much room left for you, does there? Just swing those bags out of the way, will you? The porter seems to be a minus quantity. You see, you'll have to put up with me as far as Albany, because the porter says the train is packed and this is the only section that isn't full."

He cleared a small space and wedged himself into it. "Yes," he granted, none too cordially, opening his book, "it is crowded."

Miss Stanwood eyed him frankly, and did not find him wanting. He was a good-looking, refined type of rich American, with clear eyes and a shapely hand. His ill concealed irritation with her for disturbing his comfort fixed his class at once—had he been middle-class his manners would have been better. On the whole she rather liked him, and he certainly did look funny, crowded in with her bags and wraps; whereupon she smiled, and at the same moment he raised his eyes and made his inspection. College girl undoubtedly; western bred probably; face altogether lovely; smile irresistible!

"Porter," said Miss Stanwood to that functionary, as he dashed through the train, "I wish you to remove all these things, and hang them around somewhere, so there may be a modicum of room for this gentleman in his own section."

"Yes'm, in jes' a minute, Miss."

"Porter," here a pocketbook appeared, "couldn't you see your way to doing it at once?"

"Well, Miss, I reckon I could, ef de gen'l'man is in a hurry."

"The gentleman hasn't anything to do with it. I'm in a hurry."

"There is no necessity of disturbing yourself about the things. I'm quite comfortable."

"Well, I'm not," she retorted.

The porter began a distribution of her

luggage, and Mr. Wallbright returned to his book.

"Porter, what time are we due in Albany?"

"Two-forty, Miss."

"Are we on time?"

"Yes'm."

"What time does that Boston Special go through Albany?"

"Three o'clock, Miss."

"Well, is it usually on time?"

"Sometimes it is, an' sometimes it ain't. Yo' gwine change onto dat train?"

"Yes. Is there any other train to Chicago, if I should miss it?"

"Train goes froo about two-twenty in de mornin'. Shall I hang up dat basket?"

"Oh, no; don't you touch that," she said hastily.

Wallbright looked at his watch. One hour and ten minutes more and they would be in Albany. He had some twenty hours ahead for reading purposes, and just one hour and ten minutes for conversational delights. He closed his book.

"You expect to transfer to the Boston Special at Albany?" he ventured.

"Yes. I think I can make connections all right, don't you?"

"I should think so, if we're on time."

"Well, we must be on time—that's all. I've simply got to make that train," she said warmly.

"Doubtless there will be no difficulty," he said coldly.

Some man in the case—a lover, of course—he said to himself and took up his book again.

"My sister and her husband are to be on the train, you see, and my meeting them is almost a matter of life and death. My brother who was to have seen me off in New York didn't turn up for some reason or other, so there are reasons"—here she laughed—"reasons why I *must* meet my sister in Albany."

"Telegram for you, Miss," said the porter, at her elbow.

"Thanks. This is from my brother, of course. I trust he's having as bad a half-hour as I had," she added to Wallbright.

She read the message and laughed.

"Stalled in a blockade in an automobile cab, while your train pulled out. Have wired Martha that you will meet them at Albany."

"Arthur Stanwood."

"Beware the automobile cab, is the moral of this tale," she said.

"Broke down, I suppose, and missed the train?"

"Exactly. Now, if I had tried to make a train in an auto cab, Arthur would have sworn that no one but a drunken man or an idiot would have taken the chances. Such is the logic of man."

"Compared with whom woman is the soul of reason?" he mocked.

"Woman doesn't brag about her reason the way a man does, but when the time comes she uses it."

"And does the time ever come?"

She looked at him and smiled.

"Oh, so you belong to the association of S. B.'s?"

"May I ask, what is the association of S. B.'s?"

"The Order of Superior Beings."

"I may be an honorary member—I'm not sure," he replied.

He put down his book and gave her his full attention; she was really quite amusing. She exclaimed and reached for the book.

"Oh, is that Wallbright's new book? I didn't know it was out yet."

"Well, this is one of the first copies, I believe. You know Wallbright's things?"

"Of course."

"Do you like him?"

"Mr. Wallbright? No—I hate him; but I can't help being interested in his books."

"Might one ask what is poor Wallbright's offense?"

"Oh—everything! He's the most offensive creature I ever knew anything about. I always want to get *into* his books, and talk back to him!"

The man threw back his head and laughed, and Miss Stanwood made a mental observation that he was exceedingly good-looking when he laughed.

"I suppose you like him," she said.

"He's an S. B., too."

"Well, I confess to an interest in his work."

"Oh, interest—we're all interested! It's his bloodlessness that makes me so furious with him. He's like a surgeon performing a wonderful operation—you may be interested in the operation, but if the victim is some one you like, you're not inclined to love the surgeon for it. And you always *do* like Wallbright's people."

"No doubt he tries to keep his own personality out of his work, just as the surgeon does. It is the operation that counts—not the man who performs it."

"Oh, pooh! If Wallbright had any heart and blood, he'd be a genius. They say he's a horrid, egotistical, superior creature."

"Oh, now really—he's not so bad."

"Do you know the man?"

"I have that honor."

"What's he like? Isn't he conceited?"

"Oh, yes. He rates his accomplishment rather high, perhaps."

"I knew it. Superior, too?"

"Yes, but then, he really *is* superior, you know."

"To what?"

"Um—well, the ordinary run of mortals—just as you and I are superior to these people about us."

She looked around and shrugged her shoulders.

"I should hate the man—I know it," she said finally, dismissing the subject.

"Why—why are we waiting here so long?"

"I'm sure I don't know," said her companion.

She looked at her watch and rang for the porter.

"Good gracious—it's two o'clock now—we can't afford the time! Why doesn't that porter come? How far are we from Albany, do you suppose?"

"I haven't an idea—but I'll find out."

He disappeared, and Miss Stanwood glued her nose to the pane in her effort to discover the cause of delay.

"If I do not catch Martha and Jack, heaven above only knows what I'll do," she said to herself.

"There is something the matter with the boiler, I regret to say, and no one seems to know just how long we shall be delayed."

"Oh, dear, I might have known some-

thing would happen to me! It always does!"

"I wouldn't borrow trouble. We may be able to make up the lost time. Couldn't you remain on this train, if you find you've lost the other one?"

"No—I couldn't," she said, and for some unaccountable reason she laughed.

The boiler was finally gotten into shape and they went on their way, but Miss Stanwood was undoubtedly torn by fears. So Mr. Wallbright set himself to entertain her and to take her mind off the calamity he knew they were facing. Wayne Wallbright rarely summoned his powers in vain to the accomplishment of an object, even if it was only the entertainment of a strange young woman, the chance acquaintance of an hour. Miss Stanwood discerned his purpose, but gave herself up none the less to the charm of the man, the brilliancy of his tongue, and the wealth of delightful experience which he was taking the trouble to discover to her. Nor did Wallbright trouble himself in vain, for she was an accomplished listener, quick-witted, intuitive and sympathetic.

The porter interrupted them.

"Albany in ten minutes, Miss," he said, beginning to stack up bags.

"All right. I travel like a veritable spinster, minus nothing but the bird-cage," she chattered to Wallbright. "Now, porter, you find out the *minute* we get there whether that other train has gone through. I'll be getting my baggage off."

"All right, Miss."

"How long do you stop in Albany?"

"Ten minutes genully, but only five to-day, 'cause we's so late."

"Dear me! I wonder if prayer would do any good?" she asked anxiously.

Wallbright smiled and shook his head, took up the book beside him, and wrote a name on the fly leaf.

"Won't you let me offer you Wallbright's book, in memory of a chance acquaintance?"

"Thanks—but I shall be imposing on you again."

"Not at all. I can get another copy."

"Albany! All out for Albany!"

"Oh, thanks, and good-bye——"

"You're not to be rid of me so easily," he said, seizing the champagne basket in one hand, and two bags in the other. "Lead on—I'll follow!"

She laughed and hurried out with her own burdens, and they unloaded them upon the station platform, as the porter dashed toward them.

"Boston Special went froo an hour ago, Miss. Bettah stay right on dis train."

"Oh, what shall I do?" she said, turning to Wallbright. Just then the train conductor hurried by, and she called to him.

"Conductor, can I stay on the train without a ticket?"

"No!" curtly.

She turned to Wallbright.

"Give me twenty-five dollars, quickly—and hold the train till I get back," she cried.

He counted out the money without delay, and scarcely realized what had happened until he saw her disappearing down the station steps in the distance.

"We can't hold this train," the conductor said, and that brought him to his senses.

"Take these bags back into the car," he ordered the porter; and flew after the conductor, whom he engaged in heated colloquy for the next five minutes.

"We can't do it, I tell you—we're behind now," said the conductor, and he signaled the engineer, who promptly rang the bell. Wallbright gave a despairing glance in the direction of the steps, and sure enough, there she came, with yards of ticket floating behind her. He rushed toward her, and dragged her after the train, which by this time was beginning to move.

"Jump!" he cried. And she jumped, landing in a heap on the back platform, where he joined her. She put her head on her knees, and laughed and laughed till the tears ran down her cheeks. What breath she had left came painfully. Wallbright sat quietly on the top step, as if it were a situation in which a man might find himself any day. He had the unruffled calm of the true aristocrat.

They were finally rescued by the entire

force of trainmen, who came grumbling out to find whether they were alive or dead, and they were forced to beat a retreat to Section 7 to escape the wrath of the conductor, who was savage because they had held the train three minutes! Once back in Section 7, Eleanor began to laugh again.

"It's the most absurd thing on earth," she said. "What *must* you think of me?"

"I should never dare to tell you," said Mr. Wallbright, with an approach to warmth.

"Well, now for the short story of my life."

"You needn't, you know," he interrupted.

"But you must bear up, for you've got to hear it—it's too good to keep. You see, I expected to get money from my brother, who was to see me off in New York, so I loaned almost my last cent to a girl who hadn't enough to get home on. Of course, when Arthur didn't come, there was nothing for me to do but to buy a ticket to Albany, and to trust to meeting Martha and Jack there. When I'd paid for that ticket"—here she opened her purse, and disclosed a lonely dime—"I had ten cents and the quarter I gave the porter; so, you see, I had to catch that Special. Then when I found it was gone—well, I couldn't walk the streets all night, could I? So I demanded the money of you."

"But why on earth didn't you tell me all this before we got to Albany?"

"But you were a perfect stranger. Why should I borrow twenty-five dollars from you?"

"But you did, finally."

"But that was after my reason got to work. You see, I had to have it!"

This was Wallbright's time to laugh, and he did—hilariously.

"How delightfully feminine!" he laughed.

"How far west are you going?" she demanded.

"To Chicago."

"Oh, then, that's all right. My father will immediately repay you."

"I shall not worry about it. Reason and honesty usually go together, they tell me."

"Well, Miss, yo' got on all right, didn't yo'. Yo' shorely did have a close call. I don' know what we gwine do wif yo', now we got yo' on, 'ca'se dey ain't a empty section in dis whole train."

"Do you mean to say I can't get a berth?"

"Nuthin' but dis gen'l'man's upper."

"Never mind that—you're welcome to this section. I frequently spend the night in the smoking car—it's more—airy."

"Now, I'll do nothing of the sort. I'll take the upper berth, or nothing."

"We won't cross that bridge till we come to it," he said, blithely. "Why, what's the matter with that thing?" This last in regard to the champagne basket, which suddenly upset itself without any occasion.

"The jar of the train, I suppose," Eleanor said quickly, righting the basket, and blushing. Wallbright thought she looked tired.

"I think I'll go into the smoker for a while, and perhaps you could get a little rest. Would you—could I borrow that book of Wallbright's from you?"

She passed it over, and he went away, lifting his hat with a smile.

"He has a way with him," said Eleanor to herself, "an altogether nice person."

With a furtive glance about her, Miss Stanwood extracted from a bag a piece of raw meat, and inserted it in the top of the champagne basket, which immediately went into internal convulsions, and had to be covered with a coat.

"Gen'l'man sent a pillow, Miss," announced the ubiquitous porter.

She stretched herself out, and gave herself up entirely to enjoyment of the situation. If there was anything in life which Eleanor Stanwood delighted in, it was novelty, and here she had it. "Adventure dogs your heels," her brother had once said to her. Conventional, proper old Arthur! Wouldn't his hair turn white if he could see her now, on her way from New York to Chicago, unchaperoned, in company with a mysterious stranger, who had to pay her bills!

"It seems a pity to disturb you, but our friend, the porter, has urged haste in getting into the dining car. Will you do

me the honor of dining with me?" The voice penetrated into her dream and she sat up, trying to grasp things, her cheeks red, and her hair tousled about her face.

"Oh, yes; I remember! It's very nice of you to put it that way. If beggars *could* be choosers, I should choose to dine with you."

He bowed gravely, and she rose.

"Give me ten minutes in which to make my dinner toilet," and she disappeared.

Wallbright sat down with a vague wish that she wouldn't make a "dinner toilet"—she was so adorable in her disarray. Something under his hand moved and jerked, giving forth undeniable signs of life. Before he could investigate, Miss Stanwood was beside him.

"Oh, I forgot it," she said, indicating the basket. "Did it do anything?"

"Well, it moved," he admitted.

"*Would* you mind bringing it into the dining car? I'd never dare to leave it here."

"Certainly," said he, mentally adding that he would carry an elephant into the dining car, if she asked him in that tone.

They fared forth, and found a little table for two, where they established themselves, amidst the smiling "I-know-a-bride-and-groom" expression of their fellow travelers.

"What shall I do with *it*?" asked Wallbright.

"Put it well under the table," she answered.

The task of ordering their dinner over, she leaned toward him.

"I'm going to tell you about the basket, and it's contents; only please don't think I'm crazy."

"I promise that, absolutely."

"Well, I've always been very enthusiastic about tawny yellow Angora cats. About a year ago a friend gave me the most beautiful creature you ever saw, but fierce as a tiger and wild as a jungle beast. I named him Rajah. I tried to keep him at college, but everybody was so afraid of him there that I had to send him to my brother in New York. He has a bull pup, and the pup and Rajah didn't hit it off, so my brother gave him back to me, and I'm taking him home.

I didn't dare put him in the baggage car, for if he got out of his box he'd probably kill the baggageman, so I gave him a sleeping powder before we started, and I've got him in the champagne basket, but I'm scared to death for fear the effects of the powder will wear off——"

A snarl from under their feet made them both sit up suddenly, and the waiter nearly dropped the salad.

"What's dat?" he said.

"I heard nothing," Wallbright observed calmly.

"I reckon I'se got 'em den," the man said.

"Oh, dear," said Eleanor, "if he does it again—I'm lost!"

"I'm not a cat enthusiast myself," Wallbright remarked. "Dogs and horses are my specialty."

"I like all animals. I really haven't much preference."

"May I not order you something more, Miss—do you know, it's awfully awkward not knowing your name?"

"Why, that's so—you don't, do you? I am Eleanor Stanwood; my father is J. J. Stanwood; and I live in Chicago."

Another snarl interrupted her.

"Oh, do let's take him back into the other car, everybody is looking at us so."

They took up the basket and fled back to Section 7.

"I might take him into the dressing-room and air him," Eleanor suggested.

"Have you any more soothing powders?"

"Alas, no; but I think a little exercise will quiet him down."

So she hauled the Rajah off, and Wallbright waited anxiously twenty minutes for her return.

"Mercy! I had an awful time getting him in again," she panted, dropping down beside him. "Hear him spitting and scratching—I'm afraid he'll give us trouble yet."

He never flinched at the adorable "us," nor did he have any desire to smile at himself in the rôle of assistant guardian to a wild cat—an animal he detested beyond expression.

"He tore around the dressing-room, and knocked down all the towels, and spit and growled like Sancho, but I

finally got him back. I think, if you don't mind, I'll have my berth made up early, and get him in behind the curtains, so people won't hear him."

"Wouldn't I better have him put in the baggage car over night? No doubt we could rescue him in the morning."

"I'd hate it—I wouldn't sleep a wink."

"That settles it, although I fear you won't sleep a wink with him in the berth."

"Well, at least I'll know what he's doing. There are lights in the berths, so I'll read the Wallbright book, if you'll give it back to me."

"I'm rather reluctant to do so."

"Why?"

"I don't want you to think that I've done an unfair thing, but you see, the temptation to get unbiased opinion was great."

"What *do* you mean?"

"Never mind, I trust my fate to your kindness, and your reason. Meanwhile, I'll hunt up the porter and order your section made up."

"My berth, you mean, and remember mine is the upper."

"Indeed, it is nothing of the sort. I shall enjoy my night in the smoker."

"Now, if there is any more conversation about your spending a night in the smoker, I'll sit up all night myself."

"Where?"

"Well, in the dressing-room, or somewhere. I insist upon your occupying the lower berth, and I shall be most uncomfortable if you do anything else. Won't you promise me?"

"Oh, very well. But, at least, you take the lower and let me climb up."

"You will take the lower berth, and no other."

"Don't you confuse the words 'reason' and 'obstinacy'?"

"I have your promise?"

"You have. I beg leave to put myself entirely under your orders."

"Thanks. Now send the porter."

He went out, and she sat staring out into the darkness, watching the flash of lights as they flew by like tiny meteors. Then her mind came back to her companion. She didn't even know his name! How stupid! She would diplomatically

elicit a full account of him when he came back. How tactful and chivalrous he had been—never once allowing her to feel the embarrassment of her position!

The porter arrived to make up her berth, and she carefully moved Rajah into the next section, and opened Wallbright's book. As it fell open she suddenly remembered that he had signed the copy before he gave it to her, so she turned hastily to the fly leaf. An exclamation escaped her lips and she half rose in horror. "With apologies—Wayne Wallbright," was what she read! Wallbright—this was *the* Wallbright, whom she had been ordering about, and whose money she was spending. The things she had said—oh, it was too much! Swift anger followed her remorse. Why hadn't he introduced himself, instead of leading her on to make a fool of herself? How he must have been amused at the criticism of a raw schoolgirl, the chance acquaintance of an hour's ride! She remembered his laughter, and hid her face. Well, from now on she would let him understand what she thought of him and his behavior. So that was what he meant about being unfair—the 'temptation to get an unbiased judgment.' "

The champagne basket suddenly upset and rolled over, with sounds of tooth and nail at work within. Oh, where was he? Why didn't he come back? If the porter discovered Rajah he'd order him out of the car. Then she remembered her dignity.

"Bring the ladder, porter; I'm in a hurry."

"Yo' gwine to sleep on top, Miss? I thought yo' young man was gwine take de upper."

"I have the upper," she said haughtily.

Just then Wallbright appeared.

"All safe, so far?" he asked, indicating the heaving basket.

She nodded and rose stiffly.

"I know all," she said, like the heroine in the melodrama.

"All what?" he asked, dazed.

She opened the book and pointed to the signature.

"Oh, you're very angry with me, of course. I know it was an utterly cadish trick, but you see——"

"I fear no amount of explanation will cause me to *see*, so I'll bid you good-night."

The effectiveness of her exit was somewhat spoiled by her difficulties with the basket, which he finally took from her, and put between the upper berth curtains. He offered her his hand to help her ascend, but she scorned it, and the last he saw of her as she buttoned her curtains was an indignant face and great hauteur of expression.

"Hang it!" said he to himself, as he marched back to the smoker. "If she wanted to act like a silly schoolgirl, and refuse all apologies, why, let her! What should he care about what a strange and unknown young woman thought or did? He'd show her a little study in dignity himself, when they went in to breakfast. "When 'they' went in to breakfast." Here his indignation gave way to laughter; it was too good to be true, that he should fall into a piquant adventure on a Pullman train. The poor girl—it really was a most embarrassing situation for her—to be dependent for her very food upon a strange man whom she had decided to hate.

He sat thinking it over until his mind slipped off into a delightful jumble, concerning a girl with blue-black hair, which waved away about a high, white brow, with black-lashed, big blue eyes that startled you every time you looked at them, and best of all, a mouth which was responsible for the rarest smile on earth. How those eyes could flash, too, and how they could laugh! He wasn't so sure about his breakfast manner.

When he turned in about eleven o'clock all was quiet as a grave in the car, save for the loud breathing of the many sleepers. No sign of life in the upper berth. So Rajah had quieted down, he thought, as he dropped off. It seemed only a minute until the shock came, though it was really over an hour. A shout pierced the quiet of the car, and then a groan, a snort, and a yell. In all keys they rose, and, above it all, the strangest, most uncanny noises. Wallbright sat up and thought of Eleanor—they were wrecked and he must save

her. Another yell, and then the curtains above moved and a hand knocked on his head board.

"Oh, Mr. Wallbright! Mr. Wallbright!" A terrified whisper floated down to him.

"Yes," he answered promptly, "it's all right. Just a little wreck, I think. I'll get you out in a moment. Are you hurt?"

"No, no, it's Rajah—he's out! Oh, *could* you go after him?"

"Look out, it's a wild cat!" shrieked a woman's voice.

"No, it's a panther!" another answered.

Wallbright landed in the aisle, his Japanese robe wrapped about him. Every berth had two heads, an upper and a lower, thrust out between the curtains, and at the far end of the car a yellow, spitting, yowling ball was running and leaping from curtain to curtain, now dodging in upon the unwary sleeper, and out again like a flash.

"Oh, do get him," urged Eleanor. And Wallbright started in pursuit, but Rajah had had enough of captivity and put up a good flight. Every one offered advice, and a few strangely-clad men joined in the chase. Somebody rang for the porter, who added to the confusion by loud denunciation of people who carried wild animals on sleepers. Finally poor Rajah was cornered in the smoking room, and after a fierce fight was captured.

"Whose cat is dat?" demanded the porter.

"Never mind whose it is," Wallbright answered, "the question is, what's to be done with it?"

"Git somebody to chain it in de baggage car. I don' want de job. I won't tech de beast."

"Come with me and I'll attend to it," Wallbright said, seizing Rajah by the neck and holding him well out before him, a kicking, writhing mass of fur. The baggage hands cursed sleepily at being wakened, and after much effort they got Rajah firmly tied. Wallbright dismissed the porter and sat down beside the infuriated animal and tried to soothe it. After vain, but furious attempts to get free, the cat finally resigned himself and

lay down, and then Wallbright, shivering with the cold, made his way back to Section 7. A head appeared immediately from behind the upstairs curtains.

"Well?" she whispered. "I thought you'd never come."

"We've got him hitched up in the baggage car, and I stayed with him a bit to quiet him."

"Is he quite comfortable?"

"Quite."

"Oh, you're an angel!" with which she disappeared, and Wallbright, stifling a desire to kiss the curtains where her head had been, laid him down to pleasant dreams. But not for long, poor martyr. At three a. m. the porter poked him up.

"Dat blasted cat is loose again, an de baggage man says he ain't gwine tech her, fo' fear she'll kill him!"

He rolled out and plodded to the baggage car, where another wild chase ensued and subsequent capture.

"If he gets loose again," he said, as he left, "open the door and let him go."

"Oh, I'm so sorry, and so grateful," whispered the voice from above, as he again turned in.

Breakfast was a very merry meal. His description of the baggage car battle and her description of the sleeping car scene were followed by peals of laughter, and he was astounded to hear himself assuring her that a sleepless night was a matter of no importance. He, who had once paid six milkmen a regular fee to keep off his block in their morning deliveries! Which simply goes to show that circumstances do alter cases.

After breakfast they decided to pay a visit to the captive king, and found him sullen and unsocial after his athletic night. He met their advances with such fierce defiance that they only remained for a formal call. As they stepped from the baggage car into the Pullman, Eleanor turned at a tragic exclamation from her companion.

"What is it?" she cried in alarm. "Is he loose again?"

"It is nothing," he replied. "Merely that a playful breeze coveted my hat."

"Your hat—why—where?"

"There, do you see it? A black spot in the distance."

"But what will you do?"

"Wear a handkerchief, I suppose."

That was too much for Eleanor's gravity—a vision of the smart, conventional Wallbright with his head done up in a handkerchief blotted out all sympathy for his plight, and she leaned up against the door and burst into laughter loud and long, in which he joined her.

"Can you think of anything else that can happen to us?"

"I offer up a prayer of thanks for each new disaster," he said simply.

"Prayer of thanks? But why?" she demanded.

"Because it brings us nearer together, makes us better friends. If Rajah had not escaped you might have been treating me with cruel scorn, as you did last night."

"Oh, but it was unkind of you! Why did you let me go on?"

"I wanted to know your real opinion. It's such a rare treat to get honest criticism. Of course, one doesn't care about the opinion of everybody, but in this case—don't you think you can find it in your heart of hearts to deal gently with me?"

She looked away from him quickly.

"I can forgive you anything," she said, "for Rajah's sake!"

"Then, I shall claim this declaration of amnesty for anything I may say or do—may I—?"

"No, no, certainly not," hurriedly; "you're not to think or do or say a single personal thing until I pay you that twenty-five dollars."

"But after that—?"

She smiled up at him.

"Let after that take care of itself."

"Could you let me have that money to-morrow, then?"

"Let Shylock have his bond," she laughed. "Certainly, to-morrow morning."

"And may I call to-morrow afternoon?"

"By no means," sternly, "not a moment before—to-morrow night!"

"Thank you. I hate to destroy your cherished vision of a cold-blooded snob of a Wallbright, without a heart in his body, but it must be done."

"I'm difficult to convince."

"But what about your boasted reason? I'll appeal to that."

"I won't be laughed at," she warned him. "I begin to recognize the landmarks. We're almost home."

"It's been the pleasantest trip I've ever had, thanks to you—and Rajah."

They went back and packed up their things preparatory to disembarking, and there was much mirth over Wallbright's appearance in a silk hat and a traveling suit, necessitated by his recent loss.

"The bride and groom are all ready," said a penetrating voice from a near-by section.

Eleanor grew crimson and Wallbright looked dangerous; then he leaned toward her quickly.

"Oh, I wish, Eleanor——" he said softly.

"How much is it I owe you, counting in the meals?" said she.

"Here's dat wil' beast ob yours in de basket, Miss. Two ob us risked our lives to git him in dar. Oh, thank yo', sah! Thank yo' very much!" This last after an exchange of a five-dollar bill.

As they descended to the platform Eleanor was surrounded by her family.

"Eleanor Stanwood, where have you been?" cried her mother. "We had a wire from Arthur saying he'd missed you, and then Martha and Jack arrived and said they'd missed you, and we've met every train."

"Mother dear, I fell into the hands of the only living good Samaritan! This is Mr. Wayne Wallbright—mother; Mr. Wallbright—dad; and I owe him a great deal of money, and a great deal of gratitude, and he doesn't usually travel in a silk hat, but he lost his other one in my service. Please, dearie, will you ask him out at once, and like him very much, for my sake, and his sake, and for the sake of—Rajah!"

Capt. Bill Slocum, Retributor

BY ROY E. NORTON

As the surrounding shadows of the August night deepened their enveloping clutch on the waiting depths of the gigantic forest, covered the outlines of the crags behind us, and left us seated in a little island of camp-fire glow, my companion, Bill Slocum, ceased mending his moccasin and filled a recreative pipe.

"Men are like pipes," he finally said. "Some are nice, fancy ones that break on the trail. Some char out and get thrown away. Some, clean and white, start out to destroy a world of unconquerable, yearly growing weeds, but get polished and take on color for a final resting place on a mantel; but they're all alike in the end, broken, used-up, and by and by gone. And no one cares where."

I waited in silence, for I knew that more would follow when this gray-headed, grizzle-faced and square-jawed old adventurer was driven from his habitual taciturnity, spurred on by the easy-paced steeds of reminiscence. I waited because I knew that naught but mood could wrest

from his lips another chapter from a life's history of turbulence in which all waters were not clear.

From our camp in the unfrequented and majestic Olympics we sat and watched the distant lights of Seattle, paying no heed to the palpitant little noises of night life that began to rustle and quiver, and murmur the doings of forest darkness.

In the remote black curtain a row of glittering points suddenly appeared, so distant and slow-moving that it took more than a glance to read the riddle of formation and understand that they were those of a Sound steamer, inward bound.

Bill, too, noticed it, and again broke silence.

"I bought a steamship once. Thought I'd go into the excursion business and be a shipping trust. Dreamed for a week that some day I'd transplant the old 'Bar-S' sign, I used to burn into the hides of wandering Texas steers, on to a nice blue flag that would float over all the



DRAWN BY Y. SAYONARA

"Our camp in the unfrequented Olympics."

Pacific water hole. But I didn't."

"Run out of bunting?" I suggested, interrogatively.

"No; gold-bricked," replied Bill, sententiously. "But I'm glad the way it happened." Then, at intervals, "I never did much good for myself or any one else; but one thing I've had the pleasure to do was Wong Yet. If there's any stone sodded over the place where my blankets are finally tucked and the trail ends, I want cut into its features for a autobiography, 'Bill Slocum's under here—him that played even on Wong Yet.'"

Startled, I straightened myself and laughed at the recollection of a whimsical tale told me by Bill—long years before—of a smuggling adventure in China wherein he had been betrayed by a trusted Chinese partner, robbed of a mighty venture, forced to flee the Orient and had been enabled to return to Arizona only through the beneficence of the American consul at Bombay.

"Yes, I guess you remember," grinned Bill; "but you don't know the last chapter—how I played the game of tag, until old Mrs. Chance rapped me on the shoulder and said, 'You're it.' And this time it was my steamer line coppered and the Wong Yet bet to win.

"After I sold the 'Holy Molly' mine down in Yavapai County for eighteen thousand cash, I felt pretty Russel Sage-ish. 'From this on, Bill,' says I, taking the great oath, 'you'll live like a gentleman, a capitalist and a conosser on grub. No more beans. Nothing too good, for your palate.' And to make my pledge good, goes to San Francisco town, where nobody but a capitalist can afford to eat delicacies. I buys a new white Stetson, long-tailed coat, velvet vest and red tie, a few sparklers and a striped shirt before I gets tired of spending money, and then the fun really begins.

"One morning I goes by a place from which comes a hilarious noise like a Pueblo wedding or a Chinese funeral, and sees a lot of fellows inside putting nickels in slots and pipe stems in their ears.

"'What might them things be?' I asked a feller standing outside, wearing a giddy suit that looked like a camp-made checker board.

"'Oh—go to the devil!' he says, as contemptuous as the man that owns the railway station down at Beaver Flat, Arizony, when you ask him if the trains is running all right.

"I looked at him mournfully, my fingers feeling an attraction like a magnet towards my gun, to answer his ungenteel conversation. Then he slides into another place, and when I saw the sign, it reminded me that I had business in there too. It wasn't none of them newfangled names, 'Buffet' or 'Cafy,' but just that good old heart-warming sign to steer men onto the right path—'saloon.' So in I goes.

"Deacon Checkerboards was in there too, hears me order mine and pretty soon looks friendlier. 'Guess his dispepsy warmed up when he got something for it,' thinks I.

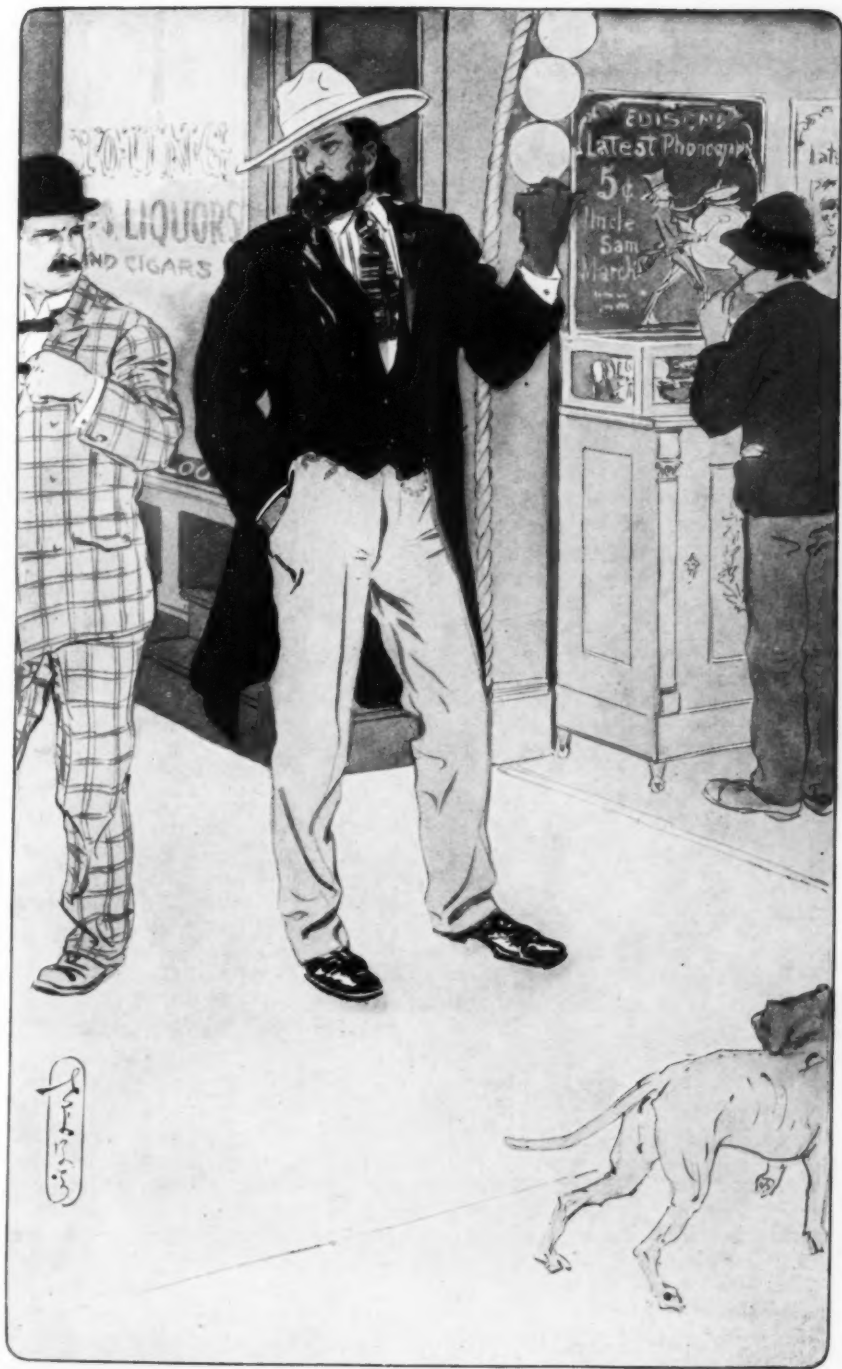
"'Were you in earnest about asking me what those were?' he says benevolently.

"'Yes,' I says. Then he tells me it's a funnygraft.

"Not to be outplayed because the limit on etiquette was too high, I orders up the tonic, and we gets sociable as a Sunday School picnic. I warms up as the dispepsy cure works, and tells him how I haven't been out of the hills or away from the cow country for many full hands of moons, and was now going to take life somnambulistically, and learn nothing but how to spend money. That seemed to interest him, and I for a moment suspected that he might offer himself as a mighty competent instructor.

"He was a real nice, sociable feller, who answered to the name of E. Hazard Greene. He took me back to the funnygraft parlors. He paid for that, and as far as I can recollect, that was the only extravagance he indulged in for my entertainment. I put the pipe stems in my ears and hears a feller who has just landed in New York and who was so happy over it he was singing to beatell.

"We wanders around for a while and lands up at the wharf, where I learns that this friend of mine is a steamboat man. Has Noah looking like a deck hand when it comes to navigation. Owns several fine steamers and wants to sell me one.



DRAWN BY Y. SAYONARA

"What might them things be?"

Says he has one of them gilded palaces up in Seattle that could be run backwards and forwards, taking the idle rich to the Bremerton navy yards, where I could make a fortune without working any. It looked as pretty as a Mexican sombrero to me.

"But I wasn't so easy. I didn't take no chances on nothing since that time Wong Yet gold-bricked me, so I says, 'Say, I know the name of a feller up there, and I'll just write and ask him about it.'

"About what?" says E. Hazard, indignant as a first-class hotel clerk.

"Now, Haz," says I—you notice I called him 'Haz'—'bizness is bizness,' says I, reproachfully, and then takes a lay-off to smooth his vaccinated feelings. 'All I want to know is that there is a boat there and that you've got the right to sell her.'

"That fazed him for a minute, but before I got my suspicions to working overtime, he agrees.

"Sure, sure," says he, 'all you have to do, my friend, is to telegraph this acquaintance of yours. I'll go right along with you to an office and help send it.'

"We ambles up to the telegraph office in the Palace Hotel, where he accommodatingly writes out and sends to my friend this: 'Go to Meig's wharf and see if there is a boat there called the *Arrow*. Is she in first-class condition, and who owns her?'

"After seeking various diversions in the way of eats and drinks, we came back to the telegraph office in the afternoon, both feeling so affectionate that we didn't stand on ceremony, and I was calling him 'Hazzie' and he was slapping me on the back and carelessly calling me 'Bill,' or 'Old Sport.' Just like long-lost partners, and me with money rainbows painted in my brain until the northern lights would have looked like a ten-cent stereopticon show.

"I was in such a hurry to get busy at the steamboat business that I could hardly wait for him to open my answer for me. It read, 'Yes, *Arrow* still here. Fine boat, good condition. Owned by man now in San Francisco, named E. Hazard Greene.'

"Honest, I hate to sell it for twelve thousand," says Greene, as though about

to copper the bet. And I had to talk mighty persuadin' to him to get him to separate for that, as it was about all I had left of my pile.

"But he did finally, with a kind of reluctant O-Bill-why-do-you-do-me air, and I dragged him into the back end of a saloon to count over the money and give me a bill of sale for the aforesaid steamer *Arrow*, Meig's wharf, Seattle.

"On the way to Seattle was when I pictured my name hurdling over the range of time alongside Commodore Vanderbilt and other ship owners. Didn't wait to walk to a hotel when I fell off at Seattle, but skated across the railway switches to Meig's wharf and sasshayed in as though I owned it. 'Where you going?' says a fellow with a Pullman porter's cap—only it wasn't—on his horns.

"Don't get gay with me," I says, important like. 'I'm the man that has bought the big steamer *Arrow*, and here's the dockyments says I'm that lucky individual.'

"He reads 'em and lets out a few vocal cackinnations.

"Steamer be blowed,' he says, after he'd gulped like a fish to catch wind. 'Come here.' And then he points out a boat about big enough for a sporting gent's watch charm, with nothing in it but one of them new-fangled 2x4 engines. You know the kind. One of them little launches that run around crazy like a water bug on a typhoid mill-pond.

"Bunkoed, by Heavens, Bill!" says I, feeling so skinned up that I had a notion to chuck a pebble through the bottom of the *Arrow* just to see the 'big excursion steamer' sink.

"The boy with the cap showed signs of merriment until I hauled out my disappearing protector, and then he got sympathetic. Started in to give me advice, but I told him I'd go to a lawyer for that.

"The lawyer took 'most all the rest of my money for telling me that he reckoned I'd better let the matter drop, as E. Hazard Greene would probably get to Europe on his handicap before I could see the tape. Even then I thought of rounding him up and shooting him full of holes, but it took money to travel, and I was shy.



DRAWN BY Y. SAYONARA

"I'm the man that has bought the big steamer *Arrow*."

"Well, I laid around a few days, disconsolate and trying to sell the *Arrow*. I didn't get twelve thousand worth of fun out of her, but learned how to handle her. Then one day I heard how the Chinese get smuggled across into this free-for-all-but-Chinese country of ours, and as it was right in my line, decided to tackle the game.

"My being able to talk Chinese helped a lot, and pretty soon I was at it full tilt. The *Arrow* was all right for that graft. Fast and noiseless. I would go to Victoria or Vancouver, get a load of Chinks, cash in advance, run 'em out by night and land 'em down the Sound. Sometimes Tacoma, sometimes Port Townsend.

"Pretty quick money, too.

"I picks up a big bunch in Vancouver one day, and my eyes pretty nearly fell off when I see at the head of this party my amiable old-time friend Wong Yet. He doesn't know me from any other maverick, because I've let my beard grow till I look

like a Mormon elder. Same old Wong Yet. Smiling like a variety actress and innocent as Mary's mutton.

"I don't let on that I can talk Chinese this time, and before long cuts my wisdom teeth on the fact that Wong has a duly signed certificate for himself so he can come in any time, but that he is going to double-cross me and the other Chinks by getting three hundred apiece out of them for the landing and expects to pay me only fifty.

"We had a mighty hard time to understand each other and make the deal, and I was scared to a yellow myself for fear some of the home talent would let slip that I could talk the language; but they didn't, and I got the job.

"Took pretty slick work to get 'em all part-way down the Sound that night, where we camped. Next night I ran 'em slow and pretty well up toward Seattle before we stopped in the woods for the night. While they were rolled up in their blankets back a piece from the cove,

where I had the *Arrow* hidden through the daylight, I would sit like a Piute and listen to them talk about China, but couldn't learn that any of 'em was Wong's and my old gang—just a job lot he'd picked up on speculation, I reckoned.

"My first calculations had been to hand the whole parcel over to the officers after I got their coin, but I thought of what mother used to say, 'Honesty is its own reward,' so decided to land them all right. But I would have given something to know what Wong thought of one Bill Slocum, had he ever opened up on that interesting subject.

"Before ever he would take a snooze he would get off by himself, and I could tell from the way he occasionally felt his blouse where he had his money cached. That set me to thinking and I worked out a scheme.

"Well, next night I made two trips, both slow ones, and landed all Chinks but two up on Smith's cove, where I gave 'em all a fond fare-you-well. Had to explain in pigeon English that the launch was 'most broke down as a reason why I couldn't take 'em all in two trips, and pretend that it was by accident that Wong Yet and another Oriental that looked like him, but who didn't know a word of English, came last.

"When the dawn commenced to sneak up over the trees I got back for that pair. I ran the *Arrow* well out this time under slow speed, and all of a sudden commenced to cuss and jump and rare and shut her off.

" 'Small—smalla?' gibbers old Wong as the screw stopped.

" 'Him sclew bleak,' I said in my best pigeon English and kept on jumping up and down like a locoed steer. Then, to make the play good and strong, I swears like I was terrified of being caught, and kept it up for an hour while the daylight came filtering out and boats began to 'most run us down in the Sound.

"Wong swore at the boat in English and then cursed my honorable ancestors in Chinese, while the other feller was huddled up in a limp heap like a batch of wet buckskin and expecting every minute that it was all off. Finally, when I knew I couldn't land 'em without at-

tracting attention, unless I ran into the cove again, I pretends to get the breakage fixed and starts her up.

"Before we rounded the point by West Seattle and came in view of the city, I watched my chance until there wasn't a boat in sight, then makes one good, quick lunge at Wong Yet. I didn't mean to hurt him bad, but took no chance, and before he could make a move cracked him one on top of his conspiracy tank that sent him off to sounder sleep than dope had ever furnished.

"The other Chink looked like a full-blown stampede into the water, until I threw the muzzle of my gun toward him.

" 'Don't leave me so unceremoniously,' says I, for the first time speaking in Chinese. 'I need your company, and besides, you ain't going to get hurt. You're my friend.'

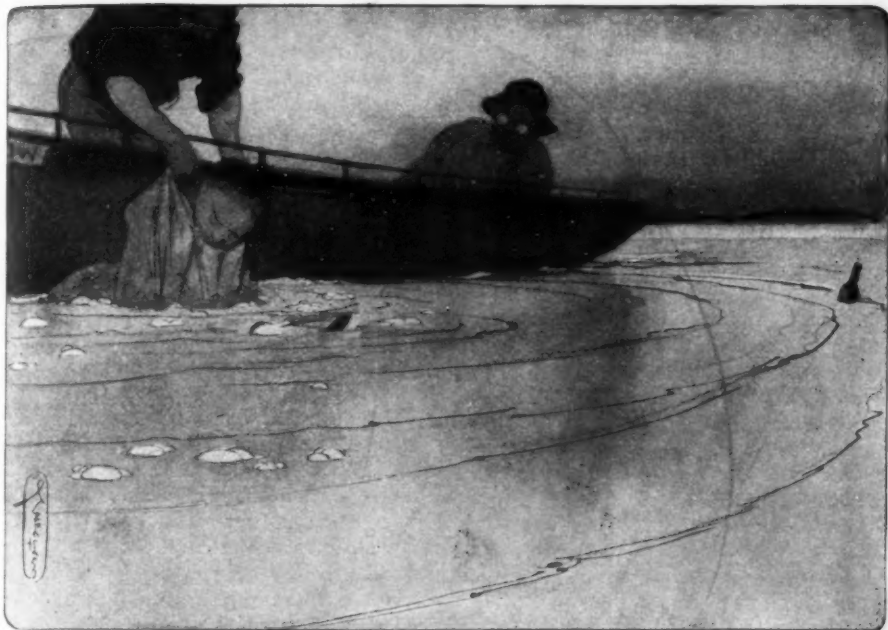
"He looked kind of skeptical as to what kind of a friend I might be, but decided to stay with the ship.

"All this time I was mighty busy going through Mr. Wong and succeeded in attaching myself to a nice fat wallet, which I afterward found had nearly eight thousand in it.

"Then I explains to this other yellow boy about the double cross on price and my old score with Wong. 'All I want,' says I, 'is for you to have a lapse of memory. Take a dose of what parlor English and my old friend Webster call 'juxtaposition of names.' Your name is Wong Yet from now until you leave America or sell your certificate and go back home. You never saw this bucko until we fished him out of the Sound. You are to put the others on when you meet them, and they never saw or heard of him before!

"You see, I knew this would carry out, because Chinese is a revengeful sort of cattle, and as soon as they found that Wong had been giving them the merry nudge on the price to be paid me they would all join the drummers to play even on him.

"Then I dumps my old friend Wong overboard and fishes him in again, wet, blinking and wondering what had happened. He asked the other Chink about it, but the other feller was very reticent. He wasn't burning up with elucidations



DRAWN BY Y. SAYONARA

"I dumps Wong overboard and fishes him in again."

about that time, but looked as if he would like to take a crack at Wong himself.

"When Wong claps his hand on his blouse and finds his wallet gone, he lets out a roar, but grew meek and orderly when he examined the front elevation of my Colts.

"At full speed I ran the *Arrow* smack-bang in front of the customs inspector's office. He was loafing on the wharf, trying to pick a filling out of his tooth with his pocket knife.

"Got a case here for you," yells I. "Picked up a Chink out here on a log. Think he was trying to beat his way in. Better see if he's got papers."

"Liar!" shrieks Wong.

"Shut up," says the burly customs. And then, "Who's the other one?" jerking his thumb towards the other heathen.

"Oh, he's all right. Works for me. I carry his papers so he won't lose 'em," I says, passing up the certificate as I talked. "His name's Wong Yet."

"The officer looks at 'em and returns 'em to the other chap, who grins, bids me good-bye in Chinese, and walks off up the wharf.

"Aided by sharp teeth and a bad disposition, Wong Yet kept the officer and me pretty busy for a minute, till we got him in a patrol wagon and off to the jail house.

"Next day I appeared against him, and the day after, as a China-bound steamer cast off her lines and swung out into the stream, I waved my fist at the mourn-fullest looking Chink I ever saw, who stood huddled up in the steerage as if he had no friends, no money and no ancestors.

"Bong swar," I called out, and then in Chinese, "Tata, my old pal, Wong Yet. I'm old Bill Slocum. Do you remember the good times we had in China before you bunkoed me out of my coin? You still owe me a few thousand *taels*, but I'll call it square."

"And then, for fear of other Wongs and Greenes, I sewed my money to my shirt, and hit the steel trail for Arizona again, presenting, before I did so, one nice, big, fat excursion steamer, the *Arrow*, to a friend of mine who tended bar for a living."

The Superstition of Molly

BY ALLAN GRAEME CRAIGIE

Molly was in.

I had begun to believe that she had taken up her residence in some other part of town, so persistently of late had she been out when I called.

Molly was in. And soon she appeared in a puffy, fluffy gown of the sort which always affects men as being beyond the seven wonders of the world in the mystery of their construction. But nevertheless it became her immensely. I arose and surveyed the "creation" critically.

"Oh," said Molly, petulantly, "if you are so intensely interested in the gown as to be unable to speak to me, I might retire and send it down."

I bowed. "It is not the gown, fair lady. The gown is ugly—remarkably ugly." Molly frowned. "But the magic of your presence, pervading even the outermost hem, makes it appear to my eyes as a robe of starlight, streaked with the mists of dawn, scented by all the flowers of the fields; even bringing to my hypersensitive ears the songs of the nightingale and——"

"That will do," interrupted Molly, severely. "You are inexcusably silly."

She seated herself upon a rattan divan with a mixture of careless grace and careful attention to the disposition of her ruffles. I drew a chair up near the most protruding flounce, and pulling a white envelope from my pocket, balanced it upon the end of my finger.

Molly glanced at the writing. "Calla's wedding?"

I nodded. "I have been informed by those in authority that you are to play a leading part in the theatricals."

"I'm to be the maid of honor."

"So I understand. I'm to play 'supe'; that is, I have a walking part but no lines to speak. I'm not mentioned in the synopsis; I come in at the bottom of the program, where it says, wedding guests, servants, etc., by the entire company. Now you are playing next to the leading lady, understudy as it were, and when she leaves the boards you

will be in training to play the part."

Molly tossed her head indignantly. "You are positively insulting."

"Molly," said I soberly, "are you always going to keep me dangling this way?"

She shrugged her shoulders ever so slightly. "How dreadfully tiresome you are! I'm sure that I am not to blame for your 'dangling'; you need not 'dangle' on my account."

I rose to my feet. "Molly," I said sternly, "I am in earnest, and I wish that you would stop talking nonsense and answer my question. Do my attentions really annoy you, for if they do I shall not force them upon you any longer."

"There," she cooed soothingly, "you needn't get dramatic about it; of course I didn't mean it that way."

I was sincerely angry. I started toward the hall; then, turning, I inquired stiffly:

"Do we go to the wedding together?"

"Oh, of course," she answered in an uninterested tone, "we will be expected to."

It was over, and I had brought Molly home. "I suppose you might as well come in and talk it over," said she at the door. I accepted the invitation.

She sank wearily into a big, restful chair. "Wasn't it perfectly lovely!" she breathed. "I am nearly tired to death."

"Swell!" I ejaculated. "A wedding such as you read about—which reminds me that we will have to read the whole thing in to-morrow's papers."

"Won't it be awful?"

"I circled around in front of a reporter all day in hope that he would give me half a column and ask for my picture; but all he did was to ask me what sort of stuff your gown is made of and how much it cost a yard and if that pearl pin is genuine, and who gave it to you, and if your hair is naturally curly, and if——"

"Don't try to be funny. I'm too tired to appreciate your efforts."

"Still, all that was comparatively easy to one question that he asked me. He asked me if you and I were engaged."

Molly rose majestically. "He did not!" "Fact."

"Whatever did you tell him?"

"Told him that if he'd find out for me I'd give him a country place with servants and retainers and two thousand a year for life."

Molly flushed angrily. "If you really wish to know, I can tell you; I can enlighten you on the subject. Oh, you—you——"

When Molly is angry she always weeps, and I saw that her eyes were becoming suspiciously moist. I capitulated.

"Please don't. I don't care to know." That was undiplomatic; her eyes flashed.

"That is, I do want to know," I corrected myself, "but I don't think that you are in a state of mind suitable to tell me. And of course I did not tell him that," I added.

Molly's moods are like an April day. The sun came out.

"By the way," said I, pulling from my pocket a small white box tied with ribbons, "I wonder what I have here. Some one gave it to me and I was too polite to refuse. Guess I'll see what I drew."

Molly flew across the room. "Don't untie the ribbons—it's wedding cake."

"Wedding cake!" I ejaculated, poising it upon the palm of my hand and surveying it critically. "If that is wedding cake, it is my opinion that they are mighty stingy with their wedding cake. I could eat three times as much as that."

Molly gasped. "Eat it?—eat it? The very idea! You mustn't eat it!"

I looked injured. "It is wedding cake, but I mustn't eat it. I would rather risk eating this than the first cake Calla makes after the wedding."

I untied the ribbons.

"Oh," wailed Molly, "you mustn't really. It is to sleep on."

I stared. "Would you mind repeating that last statement?"

"It is to sleep on. You put it under your pillow and you will dream of your future husband—or wife."

"The deuce!"

"Yes, I've never known it to fail. Calla dreamed of her future husband and she had never seen him then."

"I shall put it to the proof," I said, rising. "To-night shall my fate be made known to me. Of course you will sleep on yours?"

"Why, of course," she returned.

The morning was perfect. I decided to walk out to the links. The road was a wide path, bordered on either side by masses of goldenrod and asters, now and then relieved by clumps of trees and a very whimsical little stream which seemed to be always running across the road when you least expected it, or hiding behind the tall willow brush along its banks. In fact, I was composing a very elaborate description of the scene when I heard the clatter of a horse's hoofs close behind me and stepped aside to let him pass. It was Molly in the dogcart.

She reined up, and I mounted beside her very much as a matter of course.

"Well?" said she, interrogatively.

I took her fluffy parasol and raised it over her head. She had had to do without it, as she was driving.

"Well?" she repeated, "what did you dream?"

What did I dream! I had not thought of that wedding cake since I had put it into my pocket. I parried for time.

"You originated this scheme; you ought to tell yours first."

"Oh, very well," she acquiesced languidly. "I dreamed about him."

"Really?"

"Truly."

"Describe him. Be as explicit as possible; my heart is pounding my ribs at a two-forty clip."

Molly wrinkled her nose into an expression of disgust.

"You are dreadfully coarse—but as to the dream. I dreamed that I was visiting Calla at their new home and I met the loveliest man. He was tall [I am short.] and had beautiful black eyes [Mine are blue.] and he had millions and millions of dollars. [I—well, I have not.] And oh! I was intensely in love with him, intensely so. He was perfect! So tall, such beautiful eyes, I know there must be such

a man; I saw him so distinctly that I can't get him out of my mind. I truly believe that I shall meet him when I visit Calla."

I thought that I detected a malicious gleam in Molly's dark eyes. We were silent for several minutes. She teased the horse with the whip tassel and looked straight ahead. Then she turned.

"Aren't you intending to tell me your dream?" she remarked petulantly. "And do you know that you are holding that parasol in front of my eyes? I can't see the road."

I begged her pardon.

"Of course I am going to tell you my dream. I dreamed that I was walking along a warm, dusty road. It was summer. The thrushes and larks made sweet music in the adjacent trees; the fields were gay with nodding flowers; the brook bubbled joyously."

"Probably about such a morning and such a place as this," interposed Molly, suspiciously.

I ignored the interruption. "A girl in a dogcart came along and picked me up."

"What sort of a girl?"

"I was just coming to that. I can see her as plainly as if she were before my eyes this very minute. She was the prettiest girl that I had ever seen. [Molly blushed.] She had the loveliest brown eyes—and her hair was a dream."

"The whole thing was a dream, wasn't it?" said Molly, laughing confusedly.

"And she had toiled with the whip until she had worn a hole in the thumb of her glove." She dropped the whip into the socket and sat up very straight.

"Then, I dreamed that I was very much in love with this girl—intensely so, and at times I even fancied that she was not entirely indifferent to me; therefore I turned toward her and said, 'Molly, Molly, will you marry me?'"

Molly giggled. "Her name was Molly? What a coincidence!"

I continued unheedingly. "I said, 'Molly, you know that I love you—don't put me off any longer; haven't you played with me long enough? Molly, won't you marry me?'"

I spoke pleadingly. I had forgotten that I was supposed to be relating a dream.

Molly looked up; her eyes were bright and moist. "I've never *known* it to fail," she said softly. With a little laugh, she laid her head upon my shoulder.

We drove along in silence; presently the club house rose in view. How I hate that club house for coming up and interrupting us that morning! Molly took the reins in both hands and gave the horse a cut with the whip. I raised the parasol.

"I shall never doubt the wedding cake proposition again," said I decidedly.

Molly laughed. "You dear old fraud, you dropped it in the hall last evening."



Tony

BY LEO WESTMEATH CRANE

"We were all bad men at Lone Hill. Bad in our own way. We cursed and caroused and gambled and fought. Some of us killed others of us. When we were sober, we were sorry for everything that had happened when we were not. This bein' a good deal, kept us waverin' between sorrow and the drink, and the drink usually won. All of which proves that we were human and possessed conscience. Tony, however, was a Mexican. He had been brought up on *frijoles* and cigarettes. Mexicans in that country were credited with neither conscience nor humanity. To be human at Lone Hill it was necessary first to be white, and so at the very offstart o' the argument the Mexican element was quite three shades to the bad."

The Sergeant shook his head in silent approval.

"Primarily," resumed the crippled man, and then realizing he had hit upon a strong word that would bear repetition, "primarily—the Dobbs' were to blame. One crime begets another. If the Dobbs' had been honest men, Old Potter, the sheriff, wouldn't have shot 'em, and it's likewise plain that if Old Potter hadn't killed both the Dobbs boys indiscriminate, why, there'd been no immediate cause for the funeral."

"That's reasonable, to say the least of it," commented the Sergeant, hitching his

wounded leg into an easy position.

"They brought the Dobbs' into town on a wagon, and they were the deadest men I ever saw. The Dobbs' had been bandits, and the country was right down glad to get shut o' them. It's all right to liquor up occasionally and scare the town, but when it comes to beginnin' a bank account with another chap's money, why, that ain't appreciated. The boys all thought it would be a good plan to bury 'em in the town plaza. A goodish bit o' ground was wasting there, and the boys considered the grave would not on'y be a warnin' to others of the breed, but that by riggin' up a statchew at some future day they could beautify the place.

The suggestion came from Duff Spooner, who was a very energetic man. The crowd passed the resolution with a whoop, and they decided to put a stone copin' around the spot immediately. It don't do to hurry things too much, 'cause sometimes ye get tired of the bustle and a great scheme goes to pot. But the boys were eager for it. They started a team haulin' in boulders from the bed o' the Little Windy, and the boys piled these in the plaza until the time o' the ceremonies.

"Now, I've heerd people say that great ewents are spoiled by no man, and certainly none o' us thought that Bill Simmons' cook



DRAWN BY WALTER WHITEHEAD

"The Sergeant."

could mar so excellent a program. But Death finds his own way about, and the worst of us can't live over a hundred years. So on the day before the meetin', Old Man Vasquaz, he ups and dies. The padre—Padre José, we called him—bundles down to the ranch and prays over him, but the holiest man this side o' Paradise couldn't have smoothed things for Vasquaz the elder. He was a mean buzzard durin' life, and he didn't change much when the time came to cash in. Just before the candle burnt out, he calls for Tony. 'Tony,' ses he, 'you ain't no Mexican, Tony. . . . Yer a white man, S'truth. . . . So 'elp me! . . . I stole ye from . . . That's all, I guess. . . .' And with them very words, no more and no less, he crawls over on his yellow face and dies."

"The pup!" muttered the Sergeant, wrathfully.

"Well, sir, we tried to bring him back by all manner o' means. But a man on'y dies onct, and then he tries to make a good job o' it. He might as well have been dead twenty year. Nobody but a Mexican could have died like that."

"A Chinese coolie could," interrupted the soldier, nodding his head emphatically. "I've seen 'em die, and they equal anything known to hist'ry."

The crippled man grunted as if he were not thoroughly convinced of this, but after a brief silence, went on again:

"I s'pose Tony was mighty glad to know he was white. Anyway, he moved into a new shanty and bought himself some clean clothes. But he had sense enough to realize that the boys wouldn't bank much on the mere word—even the dyin' word—of a greaser cook, and so natcherally he wanted proof."

"I wouldn't believe a Chinese coolie if he came back from the dead," muttered the Sergeant, still anxious to argue things.

"This affair happened at Lone Hill," sternly suggested the crippled man. "China was on the other side o' the map, and as for coolies, Lone Hill made its reputation without 'em."

The Sergeant subsided into an appreciative silence.

"Tony must have hunted through the

old man's effects both by day and night. Every time he fetched up against fresh evidence o' nothin', so to speak, he'd take another long pull at a bottle kept handy. By the morning o' the celebration he was in prime condition to make his claim without any proof whatever. There are times when a bottle of raw has more weight than a decision o' the Supreme Court.

"We boys had hurried off to town, and after gettin' there in the crowd forgot all about Tony and his absorbin' question o' color. Every white man o' the community that side o' Carson's was in town that day to help plant the Dobbs'. Everything was in readiness, and we were about to make a start toward the plaza, when Duff Spooner called a halt.

"Wait a bit,' ses he. 'Wait! I've got an idear.'

"He mounted a chair in Connell's bar and made us a talk. It was to this effect, to wit: that inasmuch as every man there had suffered more or less account o' the Dobbs boys, hence, in the premises, it was suggested respectfully, that every white man free born and equal before the majesty of the law should have the privilege o' throwin' in a shovelful o' earth, which same and said shovelful would thereby square his claim even to all heirs and further assigns."

"A great idear," assented the Sergeant, with much interest.

"Well, I guess it was. It tickled the boys. We all agreed to it without further discussion. The committee of arrangements formed into line and the march was about to begin, when behold! out from a corner lurched Tony Vasquaz, three parts drunk and the rest o' him devilish.

"Wait a bit,' ses he thickly. 'Wait!—I've got an idear!'

"And his idear was enough to make men weep. It consisted simply in this—that as he had lived in the community nigh onto fifteen year without bein' recognized or considered during any part o' that time as a white man, hence, now bein' declared white, he thought it no more than bare justice that he should be allowed to deposit the first thirty shovelsful himself."

"That was bruisin' it in," said the Sergeant. "Ye ought to have given him the boot."

"It kind o' dumfounded even us men who knew of Tony's partial claim to color and humanity, but a feller named Bill Clary hadn't heerd o' that part, and straightaway he frothed over at the mouth.

"To the street, ye ranch cook," he yelled loudly.

Tony backed away, for Bill Clary had clawed out with his hands, but Tony didn't get into the street, and I noticed he looked dogged about the eyes. Some men will make mistakes, and Bill Clary wasn't above his. He remarked a foolish somethin' concerning nine-tenths o' Tony's ancestors—and then it happened. It happened quick. Bill bit off the last two words sudden, and joined the long forgotten. Tony smashed a smoking gun into the face of Sam Connell, and leaped into a back room.

"That put the Spanish curse on the whole argument. Tony was running up the street before we could let out a decent yell.

"The news went through the town like spittin' fire along a fuse. Before Tony had reached the plaza, a hundred men were crazy for his blood. Not so much because they loved Bill Clary tenderly, for to many minds the town was better off without his guidin' influence, but the fact that a Mexican had so presoomed as to thrust his idears into our midst, galled 'em.

"'What's up?' a man would cry from the houses, hearin' the row.

"'Bill Clary's dead.'

"'Who did it?' for they knew he'd never die peaceful.

"'Mexican!'

"Then the man would bolt out, preceded by a string of oaths and accom-

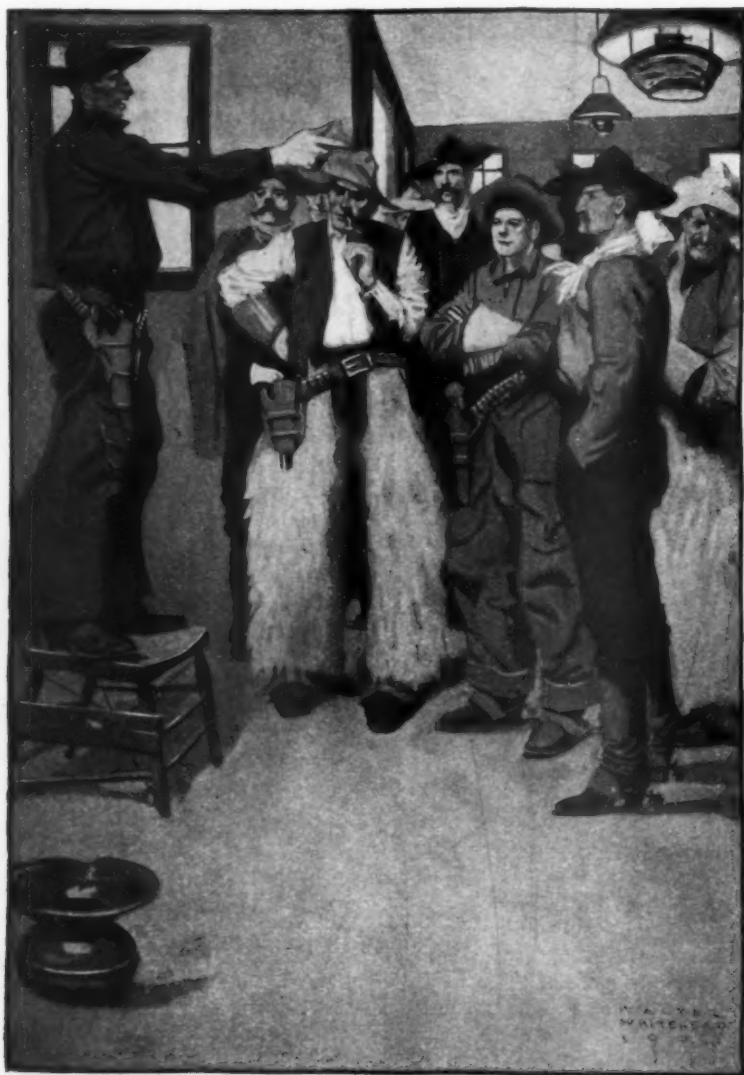


DRAWN BY WALTER WHITEHEAD

"Tony hunted through the old man's effects."

panied by a gun, to join the gang. They went down past Thompson's hotel like stampeded cattle. No chargin' regiment ever made such a sight. A mob o' tearin', cursin', maddened men, filling the street from wall to wall, and trampling on them that fell by the way.

"Tony ran out across the sunlit plaza. He had gained a bit on us, and was streakin' it like mad. Tethered to the pile of boulders was Tom Frame's horse, and he made for it. The boys began to shoot, for they knew the horse could beat anything in that country. I can see Tony now, gatherin' the reins in his hands and liftin' to the saddle, when—zap!—right in the upper leg he was hit. Around he spun, his arm waving as a



DRAWN BY WALTER WHITEHEAD

"Duff Spooner made us a talk."

streamer. There he lay upon his back, looking up into the sky, the men racin' toward him with a rope, noosin' it as they went, all because he was white and wanted it known."

The crippled man hesitated a moment; then glancing up, he met the Sergeant's gaze frankly.

"Bill Clary had sold me a horse onct," he went on by way of explanation. "so I

wasn't thirstin' for revenge. 'Sides, I had one time seen Tony fight three greasers to a finish, and it hadn't been a pleasant sight. It stayed by me, and somethin' told me to branch aside from the front file o' that crowd.

"When the boys had covered about half the distance, Tony managed to wriggle over between two blocks o' granite, and there he was like a bear in a

cave. He knew it meant stop 'em or hang, and ye can't blame a man for making a quick choice. So he finishes off George Rafferty, a good for nothin' chap leadin' the boys and shoutin' loudest. The crowd went wild at this, and when two more men were badly hurt, not to mention drunken Tom Frame, who had started for his horse and was dropped gratis, they knew it was a mass-aker and no mistake. In four minutes that plaza was as bare as your palm."

"I believe he was white," growled the Sergeant.

"So do I," agreed the other hastily. "No Mexican Gawd ever made could have acted like that. Ye can't make a fighter out o' yellow mud. However, it was too late to consider the merits o' the case. All that day the boys kept under cover. Mat Parker tried to cross the far end of the plaza, which was a fool thing to do, and he got shot in the leg. Tony had sharpened his eyes, and he wasn't taking any chances. Then the boys got out rifles and tried to pick him off, for traffic was at a standstill and there was a boycott on saloons. It was gettin' to be serious.

"Tom Frame's horse had huddled in between two masses of the stones. I s'pose he thought that Tom was on another tearin' hike, and he had never been known to desert Tom simply because it was dangerous. Sometimes we would see a stone move, and there would be a snick o' fire from the grain of it as a bullet flattened out. Tony was patchin' up the crevices and makin' a snugger place.

"When the sun was going down, the boys decided to send out a white flag. And that was a risky thing to do, for a man with his back to the wall ain't carin' much about internachional law. But again Tony proved his whiteness. He halted 'em when at about thirty yards. Duff Spooner was spokesman.

"Better take my advice and quit this right off, Tony," he ses, kindly like.

"Don't see where that's goin' to benefit me," replies Tony.

"Well—you'll save yerself a nasty lynchin'."

"Will ye let me get five miles outer town?" asks the nervy cuss.

"Not by a dern sight!" yells Spooner, excited. "You've killed two men, and three more are likely to turn up their toes at any time. We'll hang ye, Tony, accordin' to Christian law and custom."

"But where's the sense of my givin' up, if that's all I get?" asks Tony, sorrowfully.

"Why, you'll be treated like a man—you'll have all the comfort o' the last meal, with whisky, good whisky, right up to the hangin'."

"Now, Duff Spooner thought that a strong argument, but Tony wouldn't hear to it at all. He commanded the white flag committee to make tracks quickly, and he shot two holes in the flag to let 'em see he had sobered."

"Could ye blame him?" asked the Sergeant.

"No——" responded the crippled man, thoughtfully, "no——." And he kept silent for a little time, thinking, until the Sergeant by noisily clearing his throat



DRAWN BY WALTER WHITEHEAD

"It happened quick."

brought him back from Lone Hill. A great journey it was within so little time. Across an almost trackless continent and the thirty long years that intervened; from the time of Tony Vasquaz, a fighting reality of a lawless age, to the history of Tony Vasquaz, a softened picture of a peaceful memory. A countless train of olden things presented itself to the mind of him in that brief interval, throngs of comrades that were dust, and their rugged voices now fainter than the shadowed echoes. Perhaps for that one long moment they had quickened into their former warmth of living, only to fade as rapidly, a saddened line of ghosts, back into the long sealed and quite forgotten past. The crippled man gave a great sigh, and as with an effort, yet looking backward, went on along the worn trail of his story:

"Then the sun took its blush off the houses, and, wrapped in a crimson robe, went to bed in the grass at the far-away place. Grave twilight crept out from under the edge of its blanket. As a draught from a darksome cave the night blew over us. The Watchman hung His blinkin' lamps in the velvet ceilin' o' the sky, and the air was hushed again—somehow all the world seemed at prayers. That's a solemn time to me—always has been—for it is as a promise that in the great unknown, there'll still be soft nights and the breeze laden with scents from flowered places. I don't quite like this idear of nothin' but sunlight, and great brilliancy and rejoicin'. Tired men like we are want a blessed sunset, a clear night, sweet and silent, with maybe a ruddy campfire glowing away off somewhere, a bit o' love, song, and rest."

The Sergeant pulled at his black clay impressively, and did not show the least sign of impatience, for the Sergeant had been in the places where men died, and he had learned many sacred things while waiting in the ante-chamber of Death.

"Well, Hank Dawson opened up his saloon when it was fully dark, and the boys crowded in to talk about the matter socially. But they took no account of the lone man off on the plaza. He wanted his drink badly. It mad-

dened him to see men standin' in the glare of Dawson's bar, lifting their arms and putting it away. He could faintly hear the clink of glasses, the music of a drunkard's soul. So the spirit o' the dog in the manger possessed Tony. He sent a chance shot into that barroom o' Dawson's which reduced four decanters to trash and wound up in the pianny with a jangle.

"It had all the effect of a sheriff on a raid. The lights went out, and we men crawled for the door. Perhaps fifty of us, determined and indignant, held council out in the darkness. This outrageous thing was gettin' on our nerves. We knew he couldn't steal away, for a picked squad was standin' sentry, but the free-handed company o' the man wasn't agreeable.

"Then Tom Lovell made a speech. He was angry and he spat out the remarks forcibly:

"Are ye goin' to let a single half-starved greaser put a curse on ye? I ask ye if you're goin' to stand by while he takes root on that plaza? Ye wanted a statchew—but in the name o' Gawd, men, is it to be a Mexican statchew? Not for me! Something must be done and done immediate! Let me have ten men and I'll do it. We'll get the little cannon from the fort, and we'll shell him outer his den!"

"We thought it was even a greater idear than Duff Spooner's. That one had commenced the row, this ought to end it. We threw up our hats and let out a yell that could be heard a mile. The ten men volunteered at once, but along shambled Pap Jenkins, and he proceeded to knock the whole plan in the head.

"'Wot!' he cried out savage, when the thing had been explained to him. 'Wot! an' have the whole country know of it? Are ye men or wimmen? Why don't ye send to Saint Lou for the perlice? Haven't ye any pride in your former reputation? Here we've been and maintained a honeycooler of a town ever since Sam Headley struck that twelve-ounce nugget in the Last Bluff Claim, and that was three year ago. We've had more hikes to the individooal, more raids



DRAWN BY WALTER WHITEHEAD

"Tony ran across the sunlit plaza."



DRAWN BY WALTER WHITEHEAD

"The boys decided to send out a white flag."

to the saloon, more vacancies for sheriff than candidates, more well-managed lynchin's within the corporation than crimes committed, and yet ye are willing to yield up that record to the son of a ranch cook. Why, boys, there'd be no livin' in this town any more. We'd be outcasts. We'd be scorned among men. Those fellars at Turrajas wouldn't drink with us. They'd say, "Go back East an' rest out your days in some Old Wimmen's Home." No, sirs, we must shut the closet door upon our skeleton. We must hide our meal o' dirt beneath the mantle o' diplomacy. And above all things we mustn't lose our nerve, 'cause

our nerve's the on'y virtue we've got."

"Maybe ye can handle this crisis better than we can," sneered Tom Lovell.

"Why don't ye advise somethin'?" said another.

"Why, should the matter be left to me," ses Pap calmly, "I'd work on his pride an' feelin's."

"At this Tom Lovell laughed outright.

"A Mexican cow-puncher with feelin's!" he ses.

"Oh, shet up," chimed in a third fellow. "We've heerd you talk onct to-night, an' ye wanted to go twenty miles to ketch a man right under your nose. Pap's right about this. Anyway, ye can trap more flies with molasses than ye can with vinegar, so your last motion's overruled."

"The man who said this wasn't a very big man, but he was recognized for his good qualities—particularly his ability to smash the center out of a dime

piece at twenty yards, and in them days such an argument went hand in hand with logic.

"That ended the discussion. We sat down at the edge of the plaza and waited for dawn. My! it was lonely there in the dark. The silent stars above were as a sleepy death-watch, winking and gaping, and never taking their eyes from Tony. I often wonder now what he thought off there by himself, knowing that when the stars began to fade away, and the great white light would shoot up from its bed in the tangled grass, his fight against all the world would commence again.

"Several o' the men went off to sleep,

their backs against the wall o' Dawson's saloon, and their snorin' wasn't the pleasant noise in them parts. But suddenly, as a break in the deep silence, came an old familiar cry—like the howl of a lone wolf, starvin'—

"Tom Frame himself!" gasped Duff Spooner, scrambling out of a dream and to his feet.

"He couldn't have been killed," said one of the others.

"Killed!" cried Ike Young solemnly. "Didn't I see him die?"

"I know what's the matter," whined Dawson, the saloonkeeper, his teeth beginning to chatter. 'It's part o' a curse on us, boys. Hell's loose, and Tom Frame's back for his drink. He'll come to my bar, I know. He filled up there livin', and he'll want to fill there dead.'

"Now we could hear the cries plainer—nearer—singing out accompanied by the pounding hoof-beats of a horse. He was heading for Dawson's bar sure enough, and we on the porch of it were unable to stir hand or foot. Dawson cowered down, weeping. Then came a shot, and a scraping clatter as if some one had skidded off a gravel roof.

"Shet up, ye babies!" we heerd Pap Jenkins say, as he slipped a fresh load down into his gun. After a bit we nerved up and crawled out to view the result. It was Tom Frame's horse, dead as the Pilgrim Fathers.

"We were all brave men when the gray dawn rushed up out o' the East, like the form of some monstrous angel, and the cool waves from its wings could be felt. Then Pap Jenkins hitched up the white flag and went off to the thirty-yard line. We could hear him talkin'.

"Ye know what's before ye, Tony," he said soothingly. 'You're goin' to hang anyway, so what's the use of your ruinin' the reputation o' this town? We men built it, and natcherally we feel proud o' it. This thing will make of us a laughin'-stock. To illustrate: S'pose in years to come a little boy should say to his father: "Why did Pap Jenkins leave Lone Hill?" His father will have to say: "Because a mean, no-account Mexi——"'

"White, white, white," barked out Tony, viciously.

"It won't make much difference to the boy about color," replied Pap Jenkins. 'The father'll have to say it was you, an' the boy won't care if you were a cannibal-eater.'

"But I'm a white man!" yelled Tony.

"That don't mean that you're a king, or an improor, does it? That on'y allows ye a trial, and to wait for a trial would mean lost time, for ye've killed three men needless, which requires a hangin'. No more. The biggest an' the whitest man in town couldn't ask for more.'

"Then ye do admit that I am white?" protested Tony, his voice a trifle husky.

"Pap saw there was no help for it.

"You'll be white as soon as ye submit to the law.'

"Then tell the boys to hold off an hour—an'—an' send for Padre José—I've got somethin' to tell him before I quit.'

"So Padre José was sent for. He hurried out into the plaza and disappeared behind the barricade. The precious minutes went by slowly. We put



DRAWN BY WALTER WHITEHEAD

"Time's up!" growled Pap."

through a resolution among the boys that he'd have the finest hangin' ever seen in them parts.

"Pap Jenkins looked at his battered watch.

"It's about time for that priest to be comin' outside," he said grimly.

"Give him a fair show," said one of the boys. "He's tellin' all his sins, an' a Mexican can do a heap o' things in twenty year."

"Time's up," growled Pap at last, snapping to the case. "Time's up, Padre!" he called aloud.

"There was no answer from the pile o' stones.

"Time's up!" we all yelled lustily.

"Silence.

"Tom Lovell shook his head doubtfully, while Pap Jenkins frowned, for he had arranged the negotiations and he felt the weight o' public responsibility. A few minutes we waited—then, by twos and threes, out we loped, cautiously. We could hear Padre José mutterin'

before we could see 'em, and a low growl o' discontent came from the men, who thought they had been trifled with. But a moment later the gray-haired priest stood erect before them, and the curses died upon their lips. At once they halted, every man. The fresh sunlight bathed their sternly-set features and glinted on his cross of gold.

"You are too late," said Padre José, simply.

"We didn't say much; the time to say things had passed with the night. One by one we looked over the edge of the boulders. Two little mounds o' earth he had grubbed up to bolster his wounded leg. Scattered about were blackened shells, and a smuggy gun lay where it had been dropped. Twisted in the fingers of an outstretched grimy hand were the beads of a rosary.

"Bled to death," whispered Duff Spooner, as if he were ashamed.

"The cheat!" growled out Tom Lovell."

Great-Uncle Peter

BY MARGARET BUSBEE SHIPP

The inflection which the Marston family gave to the name of "Great-Uncle Peter" suggested that it was a title of achievement or distinction, like William-the-Conqueror or John-the-Good.

"Your Great-Uncle Peter will arrive this evening, Jane," announced Mrs. Marston, looking up from a letter. "You know, Ellie, he comes once a year to arrange our affairs. It is good of him to relieve us of all responsibility."

"Very," assented young Mrs. Marston, with a perceptible lack of enthusiasm.

Days of reckoning come with such immoderate haste! Her husband's modest insurance had been invested by Mr. Peter Marston so that the interest on it was paid in January and July. It was the 16th of July now, and there remained but ninety-eight dollars of the money which should support Ted and herself for six months.

"Oh, we were so happy in California!" she thought. "We did everything we liked, and I never bothered about stupid old money at all! And now I feel like a defaulting cashier, with the bank examiner at hand. He probably thinks children should be seen and not heard, and Boy is always heard."

Nevertheless she felt very proud of her son when he entered the parlor that evening. She thought his sunny face and friendly eyes must appeal to any one—"even to that rich, stingy old man," was perhaps what she said to herself.

"Edward, this is your Great-Grand-Uncle," announced Aunt Jane impressively.

"Howdyedo, Uncle Pete?" said Ted, putting out his hand with most engaging comradeship.

Aunt Millicent gasped audibly, and to cover the consternation, Ted's mother unwisely asked:

"Did you do everything I told you to do, dear?"

When "yes" would have sufficed, how unnecessary it was to itemize!

"Yes'm, ev'ry single thing. I changed my stockings and breshed my hair and washed my face and blew my nose."

"I think you slighted your hands," observed Mr. Marston dryly.

"I clean forgot 'em!" declared Ted genially, as he spread his grimy paws. "Mother, can't I wait till after supper? There's an awful fine supper 'cause Uncle Pete's come. Cook's been cross all day. The ginger preserves'll make my hands sticky, and then one washing will do for both."

Sure that her son had not made a favorable impression, Mrs. Marston dreaded still more the interview, which did not take place until the next afternoon.

"In going over your accounts, I find you borrowed money from the bank for your trip, and paid it back when you

received your interest. May I ask how you purpose to meet your expenses until January?"

There was a frightened silence.

"If your health or your son's had necessitated a change of air, I could understand it, but here at Oakridge you have the advantage of a salubrious climate and a comfortable home. I am surprised that you should squander half your income on a long pleasure excursion."

Again the silence fell. Then Ellie managed to stammer:

"Don't you think traveling improves the mind—that it will benefit Boy?"

This reason had just occurred to her, as Mr. Marston saw at a glance.

"If you will elucidate a little?"

"We went down Grand Cañon," she began desperately. "It was a wonderful ride. Perhaps it might be an unconscious inspiration to Ted if he grew up to be a poet, or a painter, or a geologist."



DRAWN BY ÉDITH O'DONNELL

"Mrs. Marston dreaded the interview."



DRAWN BY EDITH O'DONNELL

"We love to go fishin'."

"Or a circus rider," added Mr. Marston.

"He saw the ocean for the first time; he had never seen anything larger than our river in the freshet. When he saw the tides, he ran as fast as he could, calling, 'Hurry, mother, it's overflowin' its banks!'"

"The Atlantic has tides," suggested Mr. Marston, "and there is an appreciable difference in the round-trip rates from Tennessee. Besides, your mother-

in-law offered to take a cottage on the Virginia beach."

Ellie colored, and it did not escape the sharp old eyes.

"But there are no sea-gardens," she stumbled on desperately, "and Boy enjoyed them and the aquarium at Santa Catalina, and——"

"Mother," cried Ted, bursting in (he always came through a door like a projectile), "gran'ma says it's a sin to play marbles for 'keeps'—is it, mother? I won thirty-two and she says I orter give 'em back to Gus."

"Let him alone," advised Uncle Peter unexpectedly. "When he loses fifty, it will prove a stronger lesson than any moralizing. Sit down, Edward; I wish to talk to you."

This was an invitation Ted construed in but one way, and he promptly climbed upon the avuncular knee.

"Did you think the Grand Cañon beautiful?"

"Pretty?" ejaculated Ted scornfully. "Why, 'tain't nothin' but a deep ditch. It was lots of fun, though, to ride down it behind a cowboy."

"Ah, I thought you were writing sonnets about it," murmured Mr. Marston. "Tell me about the sea-gardens."

"We went over them in a boat," began Ted with enthusiasm. "Do you know what 'seasick' is? First, you eat a great big breakfast, fried sand-dabs and bread and hot cakes with maple syrup, and then you get in a glass-bottom boat, and the goldfish and the seaweed and all are so pretty, and you feel sorter funny—and then, all in a minute—why, everything you ate for breakfast, sand dabs and maple syrup and——"

"Never mind," interrupted Great-Uncle hastily. "Tell me what you enjoyed most."

"The beautiful orange groves, the lovely flowers, the big trees, or the ocean?" pleaded his mother.

Ted's reply came unhesitatingly:

"The Armless Wonder!"

Mrs. Marston rose quickly and left the room. Her shoulders were shaking.

"He was great," continued Ted. "Uncle Pete, I do wish you had been there. The Armless Wonder was in a

show at the park; he did everything with his toes. He shot a gun and played cards, an' opened a bottle of beer an' drunk it up, all with his toes! He'd lift his toe and scratch behind his ear, an' he'd use a toothpick, an' mother got sorter white-lookin', like she does when she smells monkeys. I don't mind 'em, do you? Mother said we'd seen ev'ry monkey in Callerfornyer. As soon as we'd get to a new place, we'd go to the park first; or the ostrich farm, if it was Pasadena; or to the chutes if it was San Fr'cisco. They had dandy seals there, fat ole fellers, an' 'most ev'ry day they'd have 'new animals in the cages, new actors on the stage, and new babies in the incubators!" His voice naturally took the tones of the megaphone. "It skeered mother when I'd shoot 'em."

"The babies or the animals?"

"The chutes," explained Ted. "But mother'd lemme go, and then she'd hug me ev'ry time I'd get back. Ain't it fun—me and mother like the same things? That's why we have such lots of fun together; we just love to see animals an' go in the surf an' go fishin'. And we like the same kind of ice-cream soda, an' there's a store at Los Ang'les where if you get some soda-water, you can see a lion free. He's in a cage in the back yard; he came from Africa, that same Africa that's in my jogfry. Only I didn't take soda-water there, I took navelade and it was awful good, an' mother asked me if I didn't want another glass, an' when I said, 'Yes'm, if you don't think it'll make me drunk as a peavine,' the man laughed at me and said it was orange-juice. When we went to the Big Trees, I played like I was Gen'ral Fremont, and mother was my thirty-seven men an' we camped in the big tree. Was

your mother a reg'lar dandy? Mine is. When I'm grown I'm goin' to take her to Callerfornyer. You reckon the Armless Wonder'll be dead by then? Don't you want to go with us, Uncle Pete? You ain't skeery, are you?"

"I think not. Is your mother?"

"No-sirree-Bob-Thomas! Mother likes for boys to climb trees and swim and everything, but gran'ma and Aunt Jane and Aunt Milly are mighty skeery, an' mother says it's braver not to frighten people who love you."

"I see," said Mr. Marston slowly. "Run and call your mother."

So this was the pathetic little secret! She had wanted her boy all to herself for

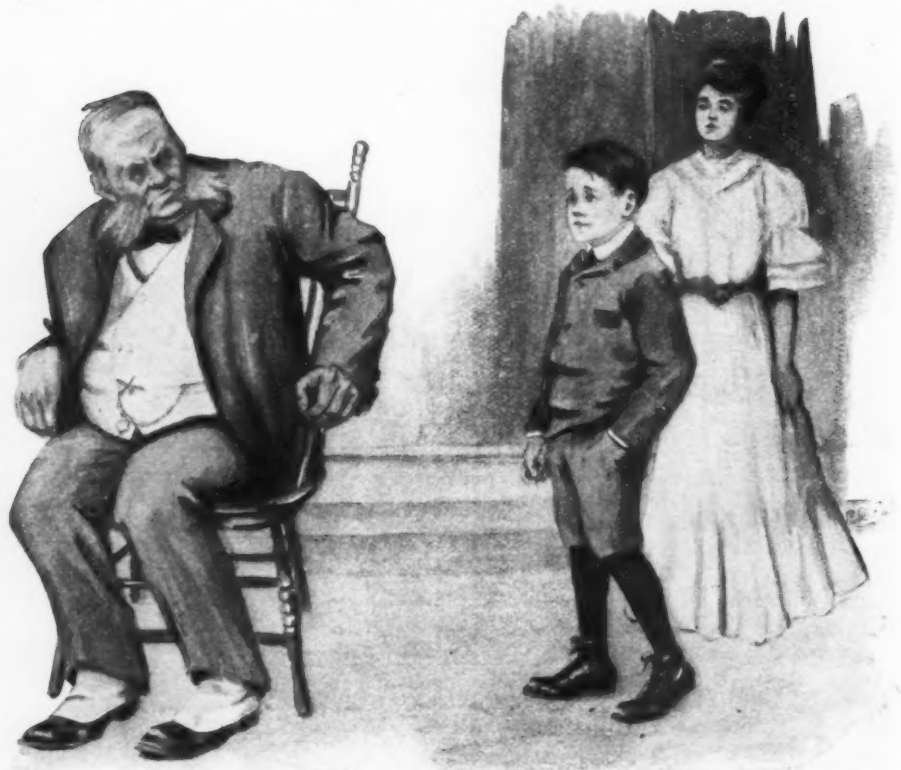


DRAWN BY EDITH O'DONNELL

"It was lots of fun to ride."

a while, not hampered by even the loving solicitude of his grandmother and aunts. They loved Edward's boy devotedly, but the little mother saw that sometimes her boy needed a fuller freedom than their anxiety for him allowed. The cottage at the Virginia beach, with the three women guarding Ted's movements, would have

he shall have an annual excursion somewhere, and I shall settle the bills. An outing for a couple of months will enable you to appreciate more thoroughly the affection of your relatives here, while the fact that Edward exists without their care may cause them to realize that they surround him with undue precautions."



DRAWN BY EDITH O'DONNELL

"Tell me what you enjoyed most."

made a situation similar to that of the old nursery rhyme:

"Mother, may I go out to swim?"

"Yes, my darling daughter;
Hang your clothes on the hickory limb,
But don't go near the water!"

"You have been crying," said Uncle Peter, from whom Ted must have inherited the habit of plain speech. "It was foolish of you. For I find that you were quite right; the trip has been of such benefit to Edward that I shall leave with you my check to cover the expense you incurred. I shall stipulate that you and

Through the formal words, Mrs. Marston read his sympathetic comprehension.

"Indeed, indeed, I love them dearly," she said earnestly. "But oh, Uncle Peter, how Ted and I shall enjoy our jaunts! Boy darling, do you know that every summer Uncle Peter is going to give us a beautiful holiday?"

Ted jumped up and down and hugged his mother. Then, as he struggled to find some adequate expression of his delight, his aunt's introduction came to his mind, and he said emphatically:

"Great, grand Uncle Peter!"

Before the Supreme Court

BY TILTON RICHARDSON

"And finally, gentlemen of the jury, I ask you to *look the prisoner in the face.*"

The words rang through the courtroom, as the attorney for the commonwealth pointed at the figure in the dock. The man sat motionless, his heavy chin in his palm, his red lids drooping. A moment later, with an irritating shuffle of the feet, he arose and turned toward the twelve men. But between him and them was the attorney. The shifting eyes met those of the accuser, and the prisoner sank back into his chair, shuddering. He had not seen the jury.

The attorney's arm fell to his side. "You have heard the evidence and arguments, gentlemen of the jury," he said. "I am content to leave in your hands the double duty of safeguarding this community and avenging its outraged law, for you have *seen the man.*"

The judge's charge ended, and the jurors filed out. Twenty minutes later, there was a stir in the courtroom. The white-haired foreman swayed, as he said, a bit thickly, "Guilty—of murder. In the first degree." The silence, deepened by the words, was broken by a choking sob, followed by a stifled scream, and a gray-faced woman pitched headlong to the floor.

When John Strong entered his private office he found a card upon his desk. Glancing at it, he pressed a button. "When did Mr. O'Connell call?" he asked the young man who responded.

"He's waiting in the outer office now, sir," replied the clerk.

"Indeed," said Strong, pushing some documents across the desk. "Please file these with the other papers in the Fenton case. Ask Mr. O'Connell to step in. I shall go home early and can see no one else."

The clerk bowed and left the room, casting a furtive and admiring glance at his chief. The door reopened to admit a burly figure which, but for its immaculate attire, might have been taken for

that of a well-fed porter or 'longshoreman.

"Well, Mr. District Attorney," said a voice whose persuasive quality suited the clothes if not the man, "I congratulate you. You've done a great stroke of business to-day."

"Thank you, Mr. O'Connell. Won't you sit down?" asked Strong.

"No, John, thankee. Only ran in a minute on my way from court."

"You were——" began the other.

"There?" interposed the visitor. "You bet! Wouldn't missed it for a thousand plurality in the eighth. Your speech certainly did put it all over Jack Fenton. It was his death warrant."

The district attorney looked up. "Well, the man is guilty," he said sharply.

"Guilty?" repeated O'Connell, with a laugh that jarred. "Of course he's guilty. Twelve men said so. He was guilty before you were half through your argument, and when you called upon the jury to look at him—I swear, Strong"—again the jarring laugh—"I could see him strapped into the electric chair."

The lawyer faced the speaker. "It's the personal element that hurts, O'Connell," he said. "I've only done my duty as public prosecutor and——"

"And everybody says that if you hadn't done your duty *brilliantly*, Fenton would have got off," interrupted O'Connell. "As it is, you're the most talked of man in the state and the next governor, or I'm not Stephen O'Connell."

"You exaggerate my importance," replied the attorney. "You forget the evidence."

"Evidence? *That* for the evidence!" cried the visitor. "Pure circumstance, to be twisted this way or that. When Wentworth ended his argument for the defense, I'd been glad to write Fenton a life policy for ten thousand. *You* turned the trick, my boy. That word picture of his stealing upon Henderson from the darkness was a *wonder!* I——"

"Stop a moment, O'Connell!" Strong

was on his feet now. "You believe Fenton killed him, don't you?"

"Of course I do, John, but"—and the big man winked gravely—"it's one thing to think so and another to convince twelve dough-heads in a jury box."

As soon as his visitor had gone, Strong left the office. During the walk to his bachelor apartments, he found ample support of O'Connell's claim that his argument had given him new prominence. Congratulations were to be expected, but the words in which they were framed invariably referred to the verdict as a personal victory. When he reached home, he glanced over the evening papers. They told the same story, but he felt little satisfaction in the general acclaim. He smiled as he recalled O'Connell's declaration that the result would make him governor and, yielding to the physical weakness of the relaxation, he threw himself upon a lounge and slept.

But the ideas of Stephen O'Connell, non-combatant Napoleon of politics, were seldom to be ridiculed. As he said, the murder trial was a political battle. Clayton Henderson, a wealthy young man of a leading family, and the compromise mayoralty candidate of the party to which O'Connell was opposed, had been shot at his library desk two days before the election, which, as even his antagonists admitted, would have made him chief executive. There was no clue to murderer or motive. Robbery was not attempted and the victim was not known to have had an enemy. Public feeling was very bitter, and it was openly asserted that the assassination was the work of a political hireling, to ensure continued power to the dominant party.

This charge, uncorroborated and unjust, was nevertheless a menace to the party's state control, already weakened by the pusillanimity of the ruling governor. In this emergency, O'Connell entered upon the most strenuous period of his life. To the insurance office from which he dictated partisan policy came the chief men of the police and detective forces, departing with a renewed appreciation of the resource of "Steve" O'Connell.

"The murderer of Clayton Henderson *must* be found" was the essence of these interviews. Then began a reign of terror for "the suspicious classes," as the idle and the previously accused are characterized by the police. Summonses to headquarters were numerous and examinations rigorous, but to no purpose.

O'Connell himself furnished the first clue. A "ward heeler" who traded with both parties, was sufficiently indiscreet to mention that a day or two before the murder he overheard loud words between Clayton Henderson and one Jack Fenton. As Fenton was an active worker for the organization of which the murdered man was the nominee, the desirability that he be accused was obvious. Even if it proved impossible to fasten guilt upon him, the feeling against the ascendant party would be assuaged. Within an hour Fenton was arrested, and the battle for his life began.

Detective skill had something on which to work, and evidence accumulated rapidly. Other witnesses were found, tongues loosened or imaginations fired by the facts made known in a judicious burst of police confidence. There was abundant corroboration of the statement that Henderson had quarreled with his political henchman, and Fenton had been seen near the Henderson mansion the evening of the murder. When this much had become public, John Strong, the district attorney newly elected to fill an unexpired term, took charge of the case, and thereafter, much to O'Connell's chagrin, nothing but conjecture reached the newspapers until the trial. The government evidence proved purely circumstantial, and was attacked with such vigor by the counsel provided for young Fenton by his party organization, that an acquittal was generally predicted. Then came into the case the eloquence of a masterful orator, who for doubt gave certainty. Even Fenton's friends grew less positive of his innocence in that hour in the courtroom.

When John Strong awoke from his nap on the day of his crowning legal triumph, he found his room in darkness. Switching on the electric current, he glanced at

his watch. "After seven!" he exclaimed. "How soundly I slept!" Phoning the café, he ordered coffee and toast, and before the waiter arrived changed to evening clothes. His hurried meal over, he was driven to the residential district and into the grounds of a pretentious estate. A moment later he was greeted by a young woman.

"Not dressed yet, Mary?" he observed, with a smile. "I thought I was the tardy one."

"No, John," said the fair-haired girl. "Would you mind, dear, if we didn't go to the theater?"

"Of course not." The heartiness of the reply hinted that the speaker much preferred the attractions of a *tête-à-tête* to any offered elsewhere. "But you are not ill?"

"Oh, no, not ill," she gave smiling assurance. "A—a bit nervous, perhaps. The privilege of my sex, you know, John. Shall we sit here or in the other room?"

Strong declared for "the other room." He always did on the evenings spent with his affianced, for "the den"—as he had christened it—was snug and cosy, and redolent of the charm of Mary Blythe. As they entered the dainty apartment, Strong's eye caught the headlines of a newspaper in the rays of the reading lamp. "Fenton Guilty in the First Degree. District Attorney Strong's Masterly Arraignment."

"I hope you haven't been reading that nonsense, Mary," he said, pointing to the paper. In these surroundings the words of praise were fulsome, blatant; the case itself seemed intrusive and disagreeable.

"Of course I have. Am I not interested in all that concerns you?" The look and tone were ample recompense, even had Strong been disconsolate over the collapse of his theater party. "But, John," the girl went on, "that poor boy—and his family—his mother and sisters."

"That's the hard part of it, Mary dear," he answered gravely, "that the innocent suffer with the guilty."

"Guilty?" There was a peculiar accent in the questioning inflection, and

Strong darted an inquiring glance at his betrothed.

"What do you mean, little woman?" he asked, gently.

"I—I don't know *what* I mean." There was a plaintive note in the voice now. "I—I was so surprised."

"Surprised?" he repeated. "It—it can't be possible you've been following that tawdry trial?" The girl nodded, and a tear crept down her cheek.

"You—you thought—him—innocent?" He almost forced the question.

"Yes—or I did until"—her words were scarcely audible—"until you began to speak."

"Until I—Good God, Mary! *You* were not in the courtroom?" The golden head bowed assent, and Strong felt as if he looked upon a tragedy. "I am very sorry for this, Mary," he said. "I had no idea you were so interested. Why did you never speak of it to me?"

The girl hesitated. "Well, you see," she explained slowly, "I—I knew the Fentons—the women—they are in my visiting district—the Ladies' Guild, you know. I talked with them—they knew he was innocent. You were connected with the case and—and—" Further utterance was choked by sobs.

"Of course they did! Of course, of course!" said Strong, soothingly, passing his arm about her waist. "It was right they should believe him innocent, and for you, too, tender heart. But, dearest, the evidence was strong, conclusive." He cringed as he spoke, for the chain of circumstance forged for Fenton all at once seemed weak and trivial.

The girl looked at him through her tears. "But the alibi?" she said.

"The evidence was contradictory," he replied. "Those who swore that Fenton was at home, five miles from the scene of the tragedy, at eight o'clock, the time at which the victim's watch stopped, broken by a bullet—well; they were prejudiced."

"Do you mean they were not believed?" came the question.

"That's one way of putting it, my dear," admitted Strong. "You see, when great efforts are made for acquittal, it is

easy for interested people to imagine things."

"So all these witnesses—the men and women who swore they saw the boy at home—are believed to have perjured themselves?" She spoke slowly, as if trying to understand a new view of the case.

"Yes, dear, that's about it," he replied. "Had there been among the witnesses some—well, some reputable, unprejudiced person, the alibi would have been established."

"John! John! You don't mean *that*, you don't—" The words died away, and a look of horror came into her face. "Then," she went on with difficulty, "then I—I—am—a *murderess*."

The strain of the situation snapped suddenly, as Mary Blythe swooned in his arms. The girl's mother, hurriedly summoned by the frightened man, applied the customary remedies. "She's been much upset over this trial, Mr. Strong," said Mrs. Blythe. "She knew the family—in church work."

Consciousness soon returned, and Strong suggested that he would better go, but Mary signed to him to remain, and a little later, when her daughter seemed herself, Mrs. Blythe left the room.

"John, dear, come and sit near me," said the girl. "I shall need all your love now. No, no. I'm perfectly calm, but there is something that must be told."

In all his experience, John Strong never listened to such a recital as that from the lips of the woman he loved. Little by little, with much halting, she told him that she had seen Jack Fenton, at the very hour the government claimed the crime was committed, sitting on his own doorstep, smoking. She had planned to go to the Fentons' that afternoon with some delicacies for the eldest daughter, Sally, who was ill, but had been detained and went in the evening, the house being only two streets from her home. She found the windows in darkness and decided not to disturb the women, but to send her gift by the grocer's boy next morning.

"But are you sure it was Fenton on the doorstep?" interrupted Strong, anxious to set her mind at ease.

"Why, I've seen him almost daily ever since I was a little girl," she answered.

"Yes, but it was very dark that night." He recalled this from the weather bureau expert's testimony at the trial.

"But we spoke," she returned. "He told me how his sister was."

With the facility of the cross-examiner, Strong returned to the attack. "Well, Mary, it was undoubtedly some other night, not that of the murder."

"It was the night of December third, two days before the city election." She spoke quietly, almost apathetically, but the words were alive with truth. But he held to his purpose.

"That *was* the night of the murder, certainly," he acknowledged, "but how can you fix the date so surely? It was nearly six months ago."

Mary looked at him rather curiously, he thought. "Some—something else happened the day I went to the Fentons', John," she replied. "I was detained from going in the afternoon, as I have said. Perhaps *you* remember what detained me?" He shook his head vaguely. "That afternoon we went driving, and you—you asked me to be your wife."

Strong felt as if he had received a blow between the eyes. Fenton's alibi *was* honest, then! But it was no time to think of the prisoner, or of himself. First must come peace to this distracted woman. His alert mind asserted itself, and he began to talk calmly.

"Don't exaggerate the importance of this," he said. "Even had your evidence been given—well, there were other things." He avoided a direct falsehood. "But why did you not speak of having seen Fenton?"

"I didn't think it mattered," she faltered. "Father said acquittal was certain, and that you told him Fenton's alibi would be supported by a regiment of witnesses."

With regret Strong recalled the flippant remark. At every turn, his own personality appeared as the Nemesis of the accused. He brought all his acumen to bear, and, before he left, reasoned the girl into confidence that there was nothing for which the condemned man could reproach her. The argument that

convinced was, that although her testimony, had it been given, might have been passed over as unimportant, it was now of vital consequence as newly discovered evidence that would demand a new trial, whose result—for so he promised—must be proof of Fenton's innocence.

He spent the night in anxious thought and reached these conclusions: there should be a new trial, with another prosecuting official, and Fenton must be saved without dragging Mary Blythe into the case. But how could this be done? Day after day he reasoned and planned, but accomplished nothing. The pending appeal would not be reached until fall, but the summer was passing rapidly. The anxiety had its effect, and people remarked upon his pallor and surmised that the brilliant district attorney was exhausting himself by devotion to duty. The wedding day, set for September, had been postponed, for Mary agreed with him that there must be no shadow on it.

As a distraction he threw himself into his work with redoubled energy, and evil-doers long remembered that period in the city's history. Corruption among minor office-holders, well-known but unheeded, received his attention, and became public scandal. Stephen O'Connell noted this with satisfaction. Although some of the rascals were political associates, they were but pawns in the game he played, and Strong's ferreting out of the dishonesty was, as "the boss" put it, "better campaign stuff than you can buy."

But one day O'Connell came to the district attorney in perturbation. "Look here, John," he exclaimed, "this purification scheme's good business, but 'twon't do to go too far. Lem Sanborn's talking ugly since he was suspended."

"He'd best keep still," said Strong. "A bribe-taking police sergeant is not——"

"It's not that he's talking about," broke in O'Connell, "but the Fenton case."

"I remember," nodded Strong. "He testified to Fenton hanging about the Henderson house the night of the murder."

"Yes," agreed O'Connell, "and now he's boasting that they don't dare bounce him because of his evidence. That's not the worst of it," he continued, dropping his voice. "The other day in Driscoll's he said he never saw Fenton that night."

"Perjury, eh?" observed Strong. "Worse than bribe-taking."

"The story's all over town," added O'Connell. "He was drunk, of course, but he must be shut up or——"

"One moment, O'Connell," Strong had risen and a hard look came into his eyes. "What does all this mean? Did any one put Sanborn up to this perjury? Was his evidence part of a plan?"

"Certainly not any plan of mine," replied the politician. "The police furnish their own evidence. I don't O. K. it."

"Oh, I understand," said Strong.

O'Connell soon approached the subject uppermost in his mind. "Pretty close to the fifteenth, John," he said insinuatingly. "Convention day, you know?" Strong nodded absently. "There'll be a clear field for you."

The attorney flung back his head. "Mr. O'Connell," he said quietly, "I shall not be a candidate for the governorship."

O'Connell stormed for an hour, oscillating between expostulations and threats. Finally Strong made his position clear. "I should be useless to you as a candidate," he said, "for the first of the month I shall resign the district attorneyship."

He gave no reasons, and O'Connell told a confidant that he believed Strong had gone crazy. He actually thought so that evening, when word reached him that Police Sergeant Sanborn had been arrested on the charge of giving perjured evidence in the Fenton case. Next morning the resignation of the district attorney was announced, to take effect in a fortnight. The evening of his last day in office Strong spent with Nathaniel Wentworth, senior counsel for the defense in the Fenton case. The distinguished lawyer declared the course he had marked out the only one possible. It was agreed that the evidence of Mary Blythe should be introduced only as a last resort.

In October the Fenton verdict was set aside. The new trial was not reached until after the election, at which O'Connell's candidate for governor was badly beaten. Public sentiment had undergone a change, and Jack Fenton was quite generally regarded as a martyr. The fact of perjury was known and, in addition, the prisoner was said to be the victim of fatal disease brought on by confinement. The trial was brief, and acquittal came ten minutes after the jurors left their seats.

One afternoon a month later, Mrs. Fenton came to Mary Blythe. "You'll excuse me troublin', miss, but my Jack's took very bad an' wants to see you." The mother's grief was pitiable, and the girl promised to visit her son that evening.

"I couldn't refuse," she said to Strong, afterwards. "I remembered that day at court when she fell fainting. Besides, perhaps if I had—You will go with me, John?"

In half an hour they were beside the dying man. "I want to be alone with *her*," said Fenton faintly to his mother, pointing to Mary. "Oh, you may stay, sir," he added, as Strong was about to leave. "If it hadn't been for you and yer lady I'd a been—Oh, yes, Mr. Wentworth told me. I——" His voice failed, in a paroxysm of pain. "I wanted ter thank *her*," he went on a little later, "fur sparin' *them*," and he pointed to the door.

Fenton began again, hesitated and finally whispered his wish to talk with Strong alone. As the door closed behind the girl, Fenton went on. "I'm glad you come, sir. I seed I couldn't tell *her*." His voice was full now. "I know from Lawyer Wentworth how yer lady took on when she thought she'd done me wrong. I didn't like ter die havin' her feel that way, fur wimmen's not like us, sir. They remembers things. . . . Lift me a little, sir, it's tough breathin'."

Strong slipped his arm under the

sufferer's shoulders and raised him higher on the pillow. "Let yer arm stay, if yer don't mind, sir. Didn't seem likely—that day in court—that you an' me'd be like this." To the pinched face came a smile more pitiful than the look of pain it could not hide. "A little cordial, please, sir. . . . Now I kin go on more comfortable. Yer was right that day. When yer told how I killed him I almost thought yer *saw*. . . . Don't draw away, sir. I'm not such a bad sort, perhaps yer'll think. . . . But they didn't get it right about the time. 'Twas after nine when I did it. I set his watch back an hour when I saw the first shot broke it."

Fenton felt Strong's involuntary start and gave a hollow laugh. "That surprises yer. I fired face to face with him—the cur! We *did* have words, him an' me, an' I went to give him one more chance. My sister, sir, my *sister*! She was a good girl, and he was a *devil*!"

The burst of fury was the end. Fenton sank unconscious, and Strong summoned the family. On the way home he told his betrothed of Fenton's wish that she should know the truth. "He did not want you to think your failure to state what you knew a wrong to him," he added. "He had great provocation in what he did, God pity him!"

Mary's eyes were more beautiful than he had ever seen them, as they looked at him through tears. "He *was* guilty then? And you were right. . . . As it had to be as it was, John, I'm glad, for—well, I could never have quite forgotten that day in court."

By and by, as they neared the house, she spoke again, anxiously. "But, John, can you ever forgive me? Your career—the governorship?"

"It was not worth having at the price, Mary," he replied, "even had there been no Fenton. And anyway, he wasn't guilty—at least not the way I made the jury think. Human justice is weak, pitifully weak. After all, there is but one Supreme Court. Fenton has gone before it."

A Tale of Ten Thousand Dogies

An "Aladdin & Co." Story: Telling of the Fanatical Obedience of
Mr. Aconite Driscoll of the J-Up-And-Down Ranch

BY HERBERT QUICK

The way I gets into this story is a shame an' disgrace, an' is incompetent, irreverent, an' immaterial, an' not of record in this case.

Eh? Adds color to the—which? Narrative! Well, I d'n' know about that. I really couldn't say as it does.

But mentionin' color, the thought of that little affair do make my face as red as a cow-town on pay-day. When I turn that tale loose we'll make a one-night stand of it by the grub-wagon. It comprises a shipper's pass to Sioux City, a sure-thing game in that moral town, which I win out in by backin' my judgment with my Colt, an' a police court wherein the bank roll and my pile was rake-off for the court. Charge, gamblin'. All hands plead guilty. All correct, says you, an' quite accordin' to the statues made an' pervided; an' so says I, ontill I causually picks up a paper in Belle Fourche, an' sees that it was a foney police court, not only owned an' controlled by the shell men, which wouldn't be surprisin', but privately installed as a sort of accident insurance on their other game.

"Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned," Mr. Elkins remarks to me one day, but all that is goin' to be changed when I ketch up with that police judge.

Ridin' the range makes a man talkative with the scenery, an' when I sees that Sioux City paper, I turns loose some remarks in the presence of a gentleman who subsekently turns out to be Mr. Elkins.

"Thanks," says he.

"When did you acquire any chips in this little solitaire blasphemy game?" says I, mad, as a man allus is if he's ketched solloloquisin' to himself.

"A man," says he, "with all the side tracks filled with cars o' cattle, an' more comin', an' no gang, is in, *ex proprio vigore*," says he, whatever that means, "anywhere where cuss-words is trumps."

He never smiled except back in his

eyes, an' I, likin' his style, hires out to him, an' was third man on the J-Up-And-Down Ranch from the day the dogies begun to be unloaded, till James R. Elkins went to New York, with a roll that would choke a blood-sweatin' hippopotamus.

Third man, says I, an' if you think the first was the Old Man, J. R. E., you know, you've got another conjecture comin'. Number One was Mrs. Elkins, an' I reckon some of her New York friends'll enter into conniptions to know that, in less'n a year, half the boys called her Josie—in their dreams, at least—an' some on 'em to her face; but none to her back, by a damsite! The Old Man—a lot of us called him Jim habitual—was a one-lunger when this dogy enterprise started, all mashed in body in the collapse of the boom at Lattimore; an' them as thinks I refer to any loggin' accident is informed that I mean the town-lot boom in the city of Lattimore, as is more fully set forth elsewhere, the same bein' made by reference a part hereof, marked "Exhibit A," which explains the broken bones afore-said. Financially he was millions worse than nothing, if you can understand that. Personally, I cain't. Zero is the bottom of the spondulix scale fer me, although the thummometer seems to prove it ain't necessarily thus. Anyhow, the Old Man had Josie, an' any man from Sturgis to Dog Den Buttes would have shouldered all Mr. Elkins's shrinkages, especially the below-zero part, to've had her jest once smooth the hair off his beaded brow, let alone take charge of him like a Herford heifer does her fust calf. Which is sure the manner Josie took a-holt and managed the Old Man. But this hain't no love-story. Quite the reverse. It's the "Tale of Ten Thousand Dogies."

I found out that when Mr. E. went into the bulb in a business way, this Wolf Nose Crick Ranch went around bankruptcy, instid of through it, becuz, mostly, no-

body thought it wuth a—a thought. An' to them as think strange of ten thousand steers, even dogies, bein' bought by a busted boomer, I'll state that any man with the same range, an' not absolutely a convicted hoss-thief, could've got 'em by givin' the same cut-throat chattel mawgitch. Old Aleck Macdonald did sure sell 'em to Mr. Elkins reasonable, though, because James R. had made him a good deal of money in this boom, an' they was only dogies anyhow.

Now, this bein' my evenin' fer tellin' the truth, I'll state that ten thousand dogies is sure a complicated problem on the range. The distinction between them an' reg'lar native range cows lays in the lap o' luxury in which the dogies is dandled in the farmin' regions where they originate. The first little blizzard, they'll hump up an' blat fer home an' mother. They'll gaze fondly at a butte ten mile off, expectin' doors in it to slide open, an' racks full of clover an' timothy to pull out an' be forked out to 'em. They look grieved an' wring their jaws becuz water with the chill took off ain't piped to their stalls, an' they moan 'cause they ain't no stalls. I'd as soon run a Women's an' Babies' Home. You cain't get it into their heads where the water-holes is, an' it's allus an even break whuther they'll stan' an' freeze in their tracks, or chase after some bunch of 2:10 natives ontill their hooves drop off. That's why Macdonald talked as he did about 'em, as I'm informed.

"Take 'em," says he, "an' don't flatter yourself I'm donatin' anything. They's no feed fer 'em in their native Iowa at any livin' price, an' on the other hand, fifty per cent of 'em'll die gettin' over their homesickness on the range. You'll have it in fer me fer stickin' you, when you know more about the cattle business. Fer the Lord's sake take 'em before they eat me out of every dollar I've got left!"

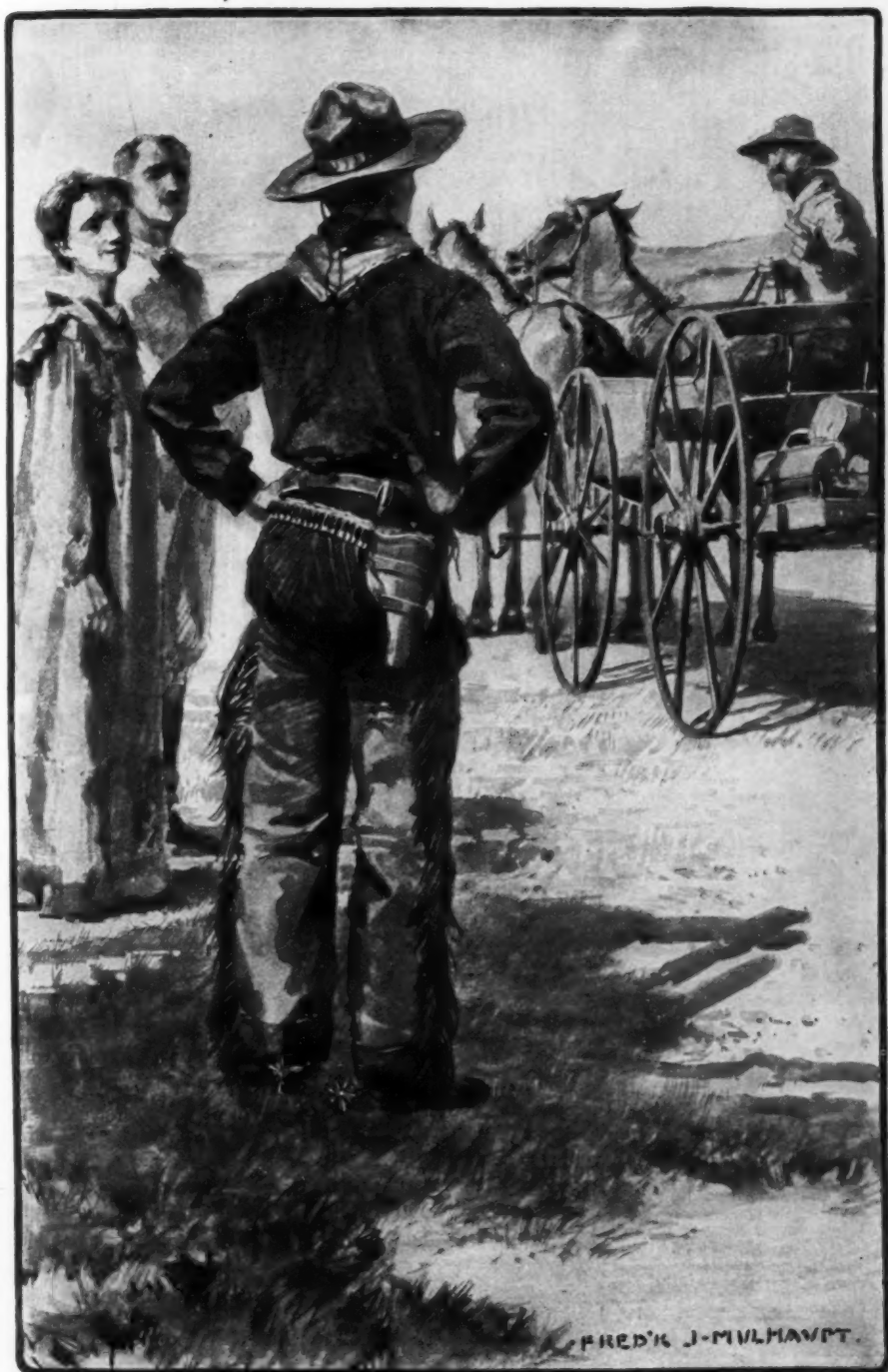
Some of this was straight goods, an' some stall; but that first winter was a special providence if they ever was one. So mild and barmy from September to March that the prairie-dogs forgot to hole up, an' Mrs. Elkins served Thanksgiving dinner in the open air on the piz-ziazzay at the Ranch. An' she rode the

range with Jim consecutively, an' said she'd found her 'finitiy in this cattle biz. As for him, the main thing the matter was that failure o' his a-millin' through his mental faculties. But this was their honeymoon, we found, an' that, an' no losses on the range, helped his case, an' by spring he begun to shoot the persiflage into the gang, an' set up and reach for things to beat fours. As for the dogies, none of 'em had the faintest show fer a beller. The grass was like new-mown hay; every little snow was follered by a chinook; the water-holes was brimmin'; an' all went merry as a marriage bell.

"The fact is, Aconite," says Mr. Elkins, addressin' me, "I knew when I heard that burst of phonetic lava from your lips at Belle Fourche, that there'd be no fear of low temperatures if you could be induced to stay by the cows, and blow off once in a while."

He had the hot air under wonderful control, hisself, an' felt good at the way the stock was comin' on—March, April, May, an' fresh feed, ponds full o' ducks, cute little young wolves about the dens, an' every one o' the ten thousand dogies stretchin' to see hisself grow. But the fall—the fall was sure a bad one fer both feed an' water. The dogies, however, couldn't fairly be called such any longer, havin' recovered from what Jim called their acute nostalgia, an' bein' pret' near's good rustlers as natives. An' well it wuz fer 'em, fer grass was sca'ce, an' a son-of-a-gun of a while between drinks. After you got away from the crick—an' you jist *had* to git away f'r grass—it was a good day's ride to water, east, west, north, south, up 'r down. On the hay-slews we had to prime the rake with old hay 'fore we could make a windrow. Laff if you want to, but they was whole outfits with less hay than some folks has gover'ment bonds. We had about enough to wad a shotgun, an' was merchant princes in the fodder line. The steers, lookin' like semi-animated hat-racks, as the Old Man said, come through the cold weather in a shrinkin' an' sylph-like way, so thin that you could throw a bull by the tail a dum sight furdern I'd trust some folks, an' that's no dream!

By this time Mr. Elkins was a sure-



DRAWN BY FREDERICK J. MULHAUPT

"Gave me his instructions from the buckboard." See page 364

enough cow-man, president of the Association, and the biggest man from Spearfish to Jackson's Hole. He knew some confounded joke on every man in the cow-country, an' not only called 'em all by their fust name, but had one of his own f'r most of 'em. Mrs. Elkins, havin' pulled him through his own dogy stage, dropped out of the cow business, an' devoted herself to kids. I knew that this dogy proposition was a sort of a straw that Jim Elkins grabbed at as he went under, an' it done me an' all the fellers good to see the percentage of loss so small, even if the brutes wasn't puttin' on weight as they orto, an' the price was away down, an' we knew we shouldn't be ready to sell when the mawgitch got ripe. Old Macdonald was Jim's friend, though, an' would sure extend the note when it come of age; an' fur's we could see, these dry seasons was only delayin' the clean-up.

So I thought, an' so thought the Elkins family, as peaceful as a Injun summer morn, an' as happy as skunks. But along in June of the third year, just in the last of the round-up, out comes what Elkins called our Nemmysis in the form of a jackleg lawyer with news of Macdonald's death, and papers to prove it, and him appointed executioner of the estate of A. Macdonald, diseased. He wanted to see the cattle the estate had a mawgitch on. I was app'inted as his chaperon to show him the stock, an' it bein' a hurryin' time o' year, I exhibited to him ten 'r 'leven thousand head of mixed pickles, and called it square. He didn't know a cow-brand from one plucked from the burnin', an' credited us up with a township or two of O Bar X cow stuff I run him into the first day out. I didn't feel that he was wuth payin' much notice to, if he hadn't had the say about the Old Man's mawgitch.

I gethered from him that he was goin' to rearlize on the outfit in the fall. I went so fur as to p'int out what a grave-robbin' scheme this was, an' how this dogy stuff had been kep' in the livin' skellinton department f'r two years by drouth an' a hell-slew of other troubles, an' couldn't possibly do more than pay off the mawgitch, an' leave us holdin' the

bag in the wust country f'r snipe outside of the Mojave desert.

"They'll pay out," says he, "an' that's all I'm required to look out fer."

I swear, I was prospectin' f'r a good hole to plant him in all the rest o' the trip. I goes right to the ranch when we pulled in. The Old Man an' Josie was a-sittin' in the fire-light, an' she had the baby, a yearlin', on her lap, and the boy, a long two-year-old, in the crib. Outside of a nest o' young wild ducks, I never seen anything softer and cuter. I reports an' asks instructions as to the best way of disposin' of Mr. Jackleg's remains.

"Quicklime," says he, ruminatin'ly, "is a good and well-recognized scheme; but we haven't any, Aconite, have we? Or we might incorporate him into that burnin' lignite bed over in the butte. Boxin' him up and shippin' him to fictitious consignees involves a trip to the railroad, an' creatin', as it does, a bad odor, an' stickin' a strugglin' railroad company for the freight, it never seemed to me quite the Christian thing. Don't you agree with me, Aconite?"

Now, the god's-truth is, I was speakin' parabolically about this projected homicide, but no man can bluff *me*, an' when the Old Man seemed to fall in with it in that heart-to-heart way, I made a lightnin' cat-hop, an' told him as sober as a Keeley alumnus that the lignite bed seemed most judicious to me, an' when should we load up the catafalque? Then Mrs. E. breaks in with a sort o' gugglin' laugh.

"Jim," says she, "you ought to be ashamed of yourself! Mr. Driscoll," addressin' me by my name, which never was Aconite, reely, "Mr. Driscoll, Mr. Elkins is not serious in his remarks."

"Neither'm I," says I.

"Of course not," says she. "We fully understand that."

"Sure," says the Old Man. "Let the lawyer take its course. Which will be assumin' possession of the ten thousand dogies; and I feel sure he'll want to leave you in charge of 'em. He's stuck on you, Aconite."

"See him in Helena fust," says I.

"But wait a minute," says Mr. Elkins. "Somebody's got to take charge of this



DRAWN BY FREDERICK J. MULHAUPT

"She sort of made sunbeams from her eyes to mine." See page 365

stuff for the mortgagee, if he keeps on thinkin' as he does now. You're our friend. It'll be more agreeable in every way to have you than, say Bill Skeels of the O Bar X."

Of course I gets roped, throwed an' branded at last, an' Mr. Jackleg goes away takin' my receipt f'r ten thousand head, more or less, of steers branded "J f" known in the cattle business as "J-Up-And-Down," the same bein' on the ranges at the head waters of the Cheyenne, Moreau, Little Missouri, an' other streams, an' God knows where else, more definitely described in a certain indenture of mawgitch, and so forth and so on, till death comes to your relief. An' James R. Elkins was reduced to a few hundred white-faces he'd put in as a side line, an' I feelin' like sheepman unmasked!

Mr. Jackleg—his real name turned out to be Witherspoon—give me his instructions from the buckboard as he prepares to pull out, in the presence of the Old Man an' Mrs. E.

"I was fetched up on a farm," says he, an' he looked the part, "an' I know a good deal about cattle. Every animal should hev water at least twice a day."

"I'll personally see to it," says I, winkin' at the Old Man, "that every steer has a crack at the growler at least semi-daily."

"Another thing," says he; "I knew a herd-boy that run a bunch of fifty cows practically dry by holdin' 'em in too close a bunch on the prairie. Let 'em spread out so's to give 'em room to graze."

"Well, fer Gawd's sake!" says I, thinkin' of the feller's sanity; an' before I could finish my yawp, off he pelts, leavin' me gaspin'.

"Wake up," says Elkins, shakin' me by the shoulder. "If you git 'em all watered by bed-time, you'll have to git busy."

He sure is a good loser, thinks I, until I figgered that with Josie an' the kids counted in, he hadn't been pried loose from any great percentage of his holdin's after all.

Now, the idee was to round up an' ship about the first of December, so the estate could be wound up at the January term o' court. Pretty soon things seemed about as they was before. I went to the Old

Man for orders, an' Mr. Jackleg's visit seemed, as Mrs. E. once said, like a badly-drawn dream. Every time I went to J. R. E. he says to me that I'm boss, an' to remember my instructions.

"Obey orders," says he, "if it busts owners."

Grass an' water was plenty ag'in, and the dogies was fatten' up. Round-up was drawin' on just as prospects f'r profit begins to brighten. It seemed a sort of a hash of midnight assassination, poisonin' water holes, givin' away a podner, an' keepin' sheep, to ship them ten thousand then. An' all the time the Old Man was a-bearin' down about obeyin' orders, and beggin' me to remember Mr. Jackleg's partin' words, an' repeatin' that sayin' about obeyin' orders if it busted owners. The thing kep' millin' an' millin' in my brain till I got into the habit of settin' around an' sweatin' heinyous, until I'd come to with a start, in the middle of a pool of self-evolved moisture filled with wavin' rushes, an' embosomin' acres of floatin' water-lilies! That's the sort of sweater I am when a little worried. Fin'ly I turned on the Old Man like a worm—a reg'lar spiral still-worm.

"How in 'everlastin' fire," says I, not just like that, "am I to see that every dogy gits two swigs a day on these prairies, an' wherein am I to take any notice of that shyster's fool talk about rangin' wide?"

"Well," says he, "you know there's pools an' water holes scattered from here to the Canada line, an' from the Missouri to the Continental Divide. A few head, dropped here an' there, handy to water, would be apt to live more accordin' to the hydropathic ideas of the Executor of the Will of A. Macdonald, Diseased. At the same time you would be conformin' to his remarkable correct hyjeenic notions as to segregation."

"Hyjeenic y'r grandmother!" says I, f'r the sitiuation called f'r strong language. "They couldn't be rounded up in a year; an' it's damn nonsense, anyhow, to foller the so-called idees of a—"

"Oh, I see!" says he, in a sort of significant way. "I see: it would be a slow round-up. Maybe my intrusts blinds

me to those of the people you represent. A slow round-up wouldn't hurt me any. But, of course, you stan' f'r the maw-gitchee's intrusts, an' are nat'rally hostile—"

I set sort o' numbed f'r a minute. A new thing was a-happenin' to me, to wit, an idee was workin' itself into my self-sealin', air-tight, shot-proof, Harveyized skull. Talk about your floods o' light! I got what Doc calls a Nôachian deluge of it right then.

"Sir," says I, "'an' Madam, truly'" —quotin' from a pome Mrs. E. had been readin'—"I *think* I see my duty clear at last! If I fin'ly *hev* grasped it, my labors requires my absence," says I, "'an' I'll see you later."

Mr. Elkins laughed a sort of a Van Triloquist's chuckle. Josie Elkins comes up, an' stannin' close to me in that mad-denin' way o' hern, sort o's if she's climbin' into your vest pocket, she squose my hand, an' says she, "Mr. Driscoll, we know that you'll be true to any trust reposed in you! An' to your friends!" An' at the word "friends" she sort of made sunbeams from her eyes to mine, an' pressed my hand before breakin' away, as much as to say that, speakin' o' friends, the ones that had reely drunk from the same canteen an' robbed watermelon patches together from earliest infancy was her an' me. Holy Mackinaw! I went out into the wilderness givin' thanks an' singin' an' cussin' myself, at peace with all the world.

I flatter myself that the work done upon, or emanatin' from the J-Up-And-Down Ranch from that time, f'r a spell, stands in a class by itself in cow-country annuals. It begins with a sort o' quarterly conference of the punchers. I gives 'em a sermon something as follers:

"Fellers," says I, "it's been borne in upon me that these dogies need drivin' where they's fewer cows to the cubic inch o' water. Moreover, they're in too much of a huddle. Here's the hull ten thousand cooped up within twenty to thirty mile of the spot whereon we stand. You cain't swing a bob-cat by the tail," says I, "without scratchin' their eyes out. It vi'lates the crowded tenement laws. It corrupts the poor little innercent calves.

It's a Mulberry Street shame. You are therefore ordered an' directed to disseminate these beeves over a wider expanse of the moral heritage. You, Doc, take Ole an' the Greaser, an' goin' south an' west with as many as you can round up, drop off a carload 'r so at every waterin' place an' summer resort up the Belle Fourche an' the North Fork, over onto the Powder, an' as fur as Sheridan. When yeh git short o' cows, come back f'r more. There ain't no real limits to yer efforts short o' the Yellowstone. We must obey Mr. Jackleg's orders about huddlin'. I'll give Absalom an' Pike the Little Missouri, the Cannon Ball and the Grand valleys. Git what help you need; I grant power to each of yeh to send f'r persons an' papers an' administer oaths, if necessary. I'll take my crew an' try to gladden the waste places along the Moreau an' Cheyenne an' White Rivers with dogies. Get your gangs, an' scatter seeds o' kindness an' long four-year-olds from hell to breakfast. For as yeh sow even shall yeh reap. If a critter smothers from crowdin' sev'ral to a township these hot nights, somebody's goin' to be held personally responsible to *me*. You hear, I s'pose?"

"Is this straight goods, Aconite?" says Doc.

"Am I a perfessional humorist," says I, "or am I the combined Fresh Air Fund, S. P. C. A., and Jacob A. Riis of these yere hills? Am I the main squeeze of this outfit, an' the head of a responsible gover'ment, or am I not? Hit the grit," says I, "'an' begin irradiatin' steers."

Obedience is a lovely thing, fellers, an' a man poised in an air-ship a few thousand feet above a given pi'nt som'ers in the neighborhood o' the Hay Stack Buttes, armed with a good long-range peekeriscope, might have observed a beautiful outbust of it, all that golding autumn, on the part of a class of men presumably onsubordinate—the ungrammatical but warm-hearted cowboys. They preached a mixed assortment o' fair-to-middlin' steers unto all men. The Ten Thousand was absorbed into the landscape of four great states, like a ship-load o' Swedes into the Republican party. The breth-

erin of the ranches heard gladly the gospel of obeyin' orders, an' wherever a wisp of cows amountin' to more than a double handful congregated together in one place, there was some obejient son of a gun in the midst of 'em, movin' 'em along towards the bubblin' springs, green fields an' pastors new of Mr. Jackleg's orders. It was touchin'. I never felt so good, so sort o' glory-hallelujahish in my life, as I did a-ridin' back to Wolf Nose Crick in the brown October weather, with the dogies off my mind an' the map, thinkin' of how Mrs. E. had squoze my hand, sort o' weepful on moonlight nights, but stronger'n onions in a sense o' juty well performed.

You can sort o' dimly ketch onto the shock it was to me, a-drillin' into camp at Wolf Nose Crick in this yere peaceful frame of mind, to find Mr. Jackleg there, madder'n a massasauga, an' perfec'ly shameful in his feelin's towards me.

"Where's these ten thousand head o' cattle, Driscoll?" he hollers on seein' me. "Here's your receipt for 'em; where's the stock?"

"Calm yourself," says I, droppin' my hand to my gun; "the dogies is all right. The dogies is out yan in the most unhud-dled state of any outfit on the range, fur from the slums of Wolf Nose Crick an' their corruptin' influences, drinkin' at the pure springs o' four great American commonwealths, layin' on fat like aldermen, an' in a advanced state of segregation. Your orders," says I, tickled to think how I'd remembered langwidge so fur above my station in life, "your orders was to put 'em next to the damp spots, an' keep 'em fur apart, an' has been obeyed regardless."

Up to that time I had looked upon him with contempt; but the way he turned in an' damned me showed how sorely I'd misjudged him. As my respect fer him riz, it grew important not to let him go on so, f'r I couldn't let any reel man talk to me that a-way, an' in less time than it takes to mention it, I had the boys a-holdin' me, and Mr. Jackleg stannin' without hitchin'.

"I may hev been hasty in my remarks," says he; "but I've been out with all the men I could git f'r two weeks, an' how

many of our herd do you s'pose I have been enabled to collect?"

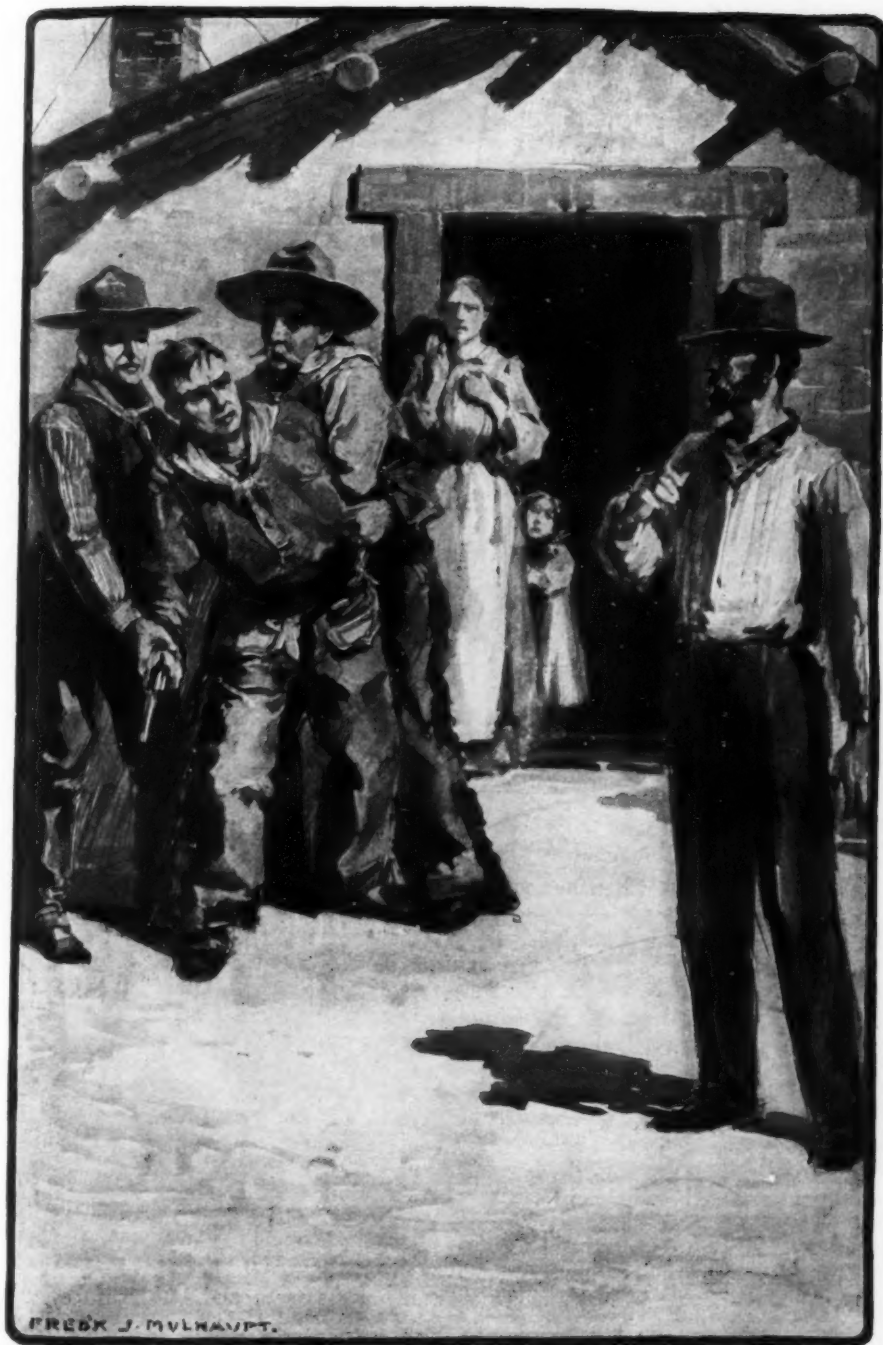
"Not knowin', cain't say," says I.

"Just a hundred an' fifty-seven!" says he.

"Good!" says I. "You've got no kick comin'. I couldn't have done better myself. But you won't git as many in the next two weeks! Cheer up; the wust is yet to come!"

An' at that he flies off the handle ag'in, an' lights out f'r the East, with the estate all unwound, I s'pose.

Now, everybody knows the rest of this story. Everybody knows how grass an' water an' winters favored the range-stuff f'r the next two years. Them dogies was as well off 's if they'd been in upholstered sheds eatin' gilded hay. When ol' Dakoty starts out to kill stock, she reg'lar Mountain-Medders-Massacres 'em; but when she turns in to make a feed-yard of herself, she's a cow paradise without snakes. The hist'ry of these dogies illustrates this p'int, an' shows our beautiful system of enforcin' honesty in marketin' range cattle whereby the active robbery is confined to the stock-yards folks and the packers, where it won't do no moral harm. As was perfec'ly square an' right, the brand inspectors at Omaha, Sioux City, Chicago an' Kansas City was on the lookout f'r J-Up-And-Down steers in the intrusts of Mr. J-ckleg's mawgitch; an' after every round-up, some on 'em would dribble in with the shipments, an' be sold an' proceeds gobbled accordin' to Hoyle. An' when things got good—dogies about the size of Norman hosses, an' as fat as Suffolk pigs—the word goes out from Wolf Nose Crick to every ranch on the range, that the anti-slum crusade was off, an' J-Up-And-Down stuff was to be shipped as rounded up. F'r weeks an' months, I'm told, pret' near every car had some of 'em. Top grassers, they was at last, in weight an' price, an' when the half of 'em was in, the Estate of A. Macdonald, Diseased, was wound up, tight as a drum, intrust an' principal, an' Jim Elkins had left a little trifle o' five thousand beeves, wuth around a hundred apiece, free an' clear, an' the record of Aconite Driscoll, as a philanthropist, a humannytarian, an' a practical cow-puncher, was once more as clear as a Christian's eye.



DRAWN BY FREDERICK J. MULHAUPT

"I had the boys a-holdin' me."

An' this is how Jim Elkins got his ante in this New York game he's a-buckin' so successful. An' so it was that my little meet-up with a Sioux City shell-man, which I'm lookin' fer yit, results in a reg'lar Pullman sleeper trip to Chicago, where I'm the guest of honor at a feedin' contest instituted by Mr. James R. Elkins, whereat Mr. Jackleg—Witherspoon, I mean, and dead game after all, if any one should inquire—makes a talk about the pleasure it affords all of us to see our old friend Elkins restored to those financial circulars where he was so well known, an' so much at home; an' alludin' to me as restorer-in-chief by virtue of my great feet, an' losin' ten thousand dogies so that Pinkerton himself couldn't find 'em until the wilderness saw fit to disgorge 'em in its own wild an' woolly way. An' fin'ly I'm called on an' made to git up, loosed at the strange grazin' ground, but game to do my best, an' after millin' awhile, "I'm here," says I, "owin' to my

eckstrordinary talent f'r obeyin' orders. I'm told to come hither, an' I at once set out to prove my effectiveness as a come-hitherer. As f'r losin' ten thousand dogies, I cain't see what that has to do with my great feet. An' right here," I says, "I wish to state that I onst lost something else, to wit, my val'able temper, at something done 'r said by a gentleman now present, for all of which I begs pardon of Mr. Jackleg—Mr. Witherspoon, I means," says I, an' everybody hollers an' pounds, him most of all, but redder'n a turkey, "an' I wish to state that it does me good to feel that harmony and peace between him an' me is restored. Here in Chicago," says I, "him an' me can git together on the platform of feedin' in bunches, without dehornin'; with the paramount issue to go before the people on, however, that old plank o' his'n declarin' f'r frekent drinks!"

After that, I don't remember what eventuated—not quite so clear.

The Other Man

BY ELSIE CARMICHAEL

RYE, N. Y.

Dear Bess:—

I don't see why you had to decide to go abroad this spring. It was really very inconsiderate of you. Everything is as dull as ditch water, and it's enough to give one melancholia to look across the street and see your house all barred and shuttered. It's queer how dependent one gets to be on one's old friends—the ones one knew when one wore "knickers." Didn't I hold out well on the "ones"?

We are doing the same old stunts, same old rarebit parties, same old rarebits grown tougher if anything, business all day, same old grind in the office, then an hour of golf or a spin in the automobile. I have a nice little new runabout which you would like, I am sure. If you were only here I would teach you how to run it and you could use it all day when I am in town.

There is a nice girl visiting Edith Jeffries, who plays golf better than any girl I ever saw. In fact, she has no end of silver cups and I think stands a good show for being the American champion in a year or two. She is really a mighty nice girl, and I have asked her to go to the Regatta with me. Jack and Maude are going to chaperon. Doesn't it seem ridiculous to think of my young sister chaperoning us? Just because she happens to have married Jack does not make her any more eligible in my opinion, but as long as Madame Grundy is satisfied I have no kick coming. She is awfully pretty—Mildred Somers, not Madame Grundy—one of those strong, husky-looking girls, with lots of color and flashing white teeth and big brown eyes. I wish you could see her.

I am sorry you won't be here for the Regatta. It will be fine this year—of course, a clean sweep for Yale, but still

there will be some excitement. Billy Trenholm, you know, is captain of the Varsity, and Ted is rowing bow, and your old friend Winthrop Dunham is head coach. I'm awfully sorry you have to miss it, Bess. We have our triennial at New Haven this year, and all the men you used to know will be back—Putnam and Rafe Jones and Jimmy Morton and the Duke. We will probably go for a short yachting trip after the race.

I know you will be busy over there among all those interesting old places, but don't forget your old friends, Bess, and send a fellow a line once in a while, not a miserable picture post card, but a real letter.

Affectionately,

TOM.

AT SEA.

Dear Tom:—

In a lucid moment I am going to try to scrawl you a line. We are three days out and I am looking forward most anxiously to the green shores of Old England, as long as there is no half-way island on which I can be put off. You know I never was a good sailor, and this time we have had a very rough passage and I have been most melancholy. I spent all yesterday in my berth, most unhappy, but most devotedly cared for by my funny German stewardess and steward. Meyer, who speaks what he considers perfect English, came in at intervals with cheering news. At noon it was, "Lady, we have gone five hundred and dirty miles to-day," at which I muttered a pious *Te Deum*.

A little later he came in bursting with the news, "Lady, you look out your port-hole. We pass big steamer." And so I lay anxiously in the upper berth looking out at the heaving dark blue sea until suddenly, just for a second, framed in the round opening like a picture, appeared *Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse*. She was very near, not more than a mile away, a beautiful, graceful live creature, steadily making her way back to New York, and (must I confess it?) I buried my face in the pillow with a desperate longing for the homeland.

All night it grew rougher. We rolled

back and forth and pitched up and down all at once, and I hung on in desperation to keep from falling off my three by six shelf, while I could hear the trunks chasing each other about the cabin. In the dimness outside sometimes a great sheet of foam, ghostly in the black night, rose like a wraith and peered in at the port-hole. In the early morning light I lay and watched the spouting, frothing waves rolling on for miles. The horizon line looked like a distant rough mountain chain. Sometimes when we descended suddenly into the trough of the sea it was like looking over miles of snow-capped mountain peaks, jagged, rough and high. It was a glorious sight, but the moment I raised my head from my berth—*Ach Himmel!*

But this afternoon, after spending quite two hours over my toilette, I managed to crawl up on deck. As I reached the door I drew in my breath with a gasp. A rush of sea wind met me, outside the deck sloped down steeply, and beyond it all was a tremendous sweep of mountainous, foaming waves, deep blue in the distance, with splashes of clear translucent green where they broke. The far-off waves looked like snowy icebergs in the sunshine. There came the roar and splash of many waters and above it all the deeper roar of the revolving screw as the ship rolled. It was spectacular! It took my breath away! It was the most magnificent thing I ever saw!

Then, when it seemed as if we must go over, the ship regained herself, rose up buoyantly like some live thing, tossing back the white foam in high defiance, and at that moment, that supreme moment, a fat old woman pushed by me and cried ecstatically, "Oh, ain't it pretty?"

Tommie, the reaction was too great. Some one grabbed me and set me down in a deck chair or I really think I should have gone overboard. After I was carefully tucked in I found my rescuer was the ship's doctor, who has been most kind and delightful in every way. He is coming now, so I will stop and finish this later.

* * * * *

OXFORD.

You see, I began this letter on ship-board and intended mailing it at Plymouth,

but those last days on ship were so full that I really did not have time for letter writing. I was making up for the three miserable days I lost, and was having the time of my life, Tommie Burton!

I received your very interesting letter in London. I am *glad* you are having such a good time. It seems to me you manage to solace yourself pretty well in spite of your absent friends. I was amused at your raving about Mildred Somers. I know her slightly, but I never thought she was especially pretty, though I believe she does play golf very well, and you, I know, like those strenuous girls.

Oxford is charming. We have been all around the colleges and were entertained in a number of the men's rooms by friends of my Uncle Peter, who is living in Oxford now, you know. It was great fun, and so interesting to compare it with the students' teas at old Yale. You all have a lot to learn from these Englishmen, and then you never *can* make your buildings look as old, even if you do plant ivy all over them. Why, I really believe that the ivy here holds these quaint old buildings together, and if the vines were pulled down a crumbling skeleton would fall into a heap of dust. The age of the place is appalling! I fully expect to see Alfred the Great appear in some old lime tree walk. As for Samuel Johnson and such moderns, why, they would be nothing out of the ordinary.

But last evening, Tommie, I had an experience romantic to the last degree. I went with—well, a very nice man, for a walk after dinner. We ran away from the others at the quaint old Mitre Hotel, and went down the wide, shady walk through Christ Church meadows to the dear old Isis, where the college barges are moored, with their gay coats of arms on the stern. We sat down on top of the University barge and watched the men and girls in punts and canoes lazily drifting about in the sunset. There were four-oared shells shooting past and sometimes a college eight practicing for Henley. Behind all the river and the cricket fields and the meadows was a glorious

sunset sky, against which the towers and spires of Oxford were sharply silhouetted. I had to pinch myself to know whether it were really Bess Duncan or some one else.

But that was not the best, Tommie. When the sunset had faded out into clear rose we took the path along the quiet, winding Cherwell, with the great trees leaning over and forming a perfect arch, and there in the quietest, most romantic spot, suddenly we stopped spellbound by the most marvelous sound I ever heard. It was a nightingale! I don't know how long we stood there in the silence until the wonderful little creature flew away. The spell was broken, and we strolled on, hardly speaking. As our path curved back towards the town, the full moon rose above the square old tower of Magdalen College. Can you imagine a more beautiful sight? We could not stop long to enjoy it, however, for already Great Tom was tolling his one hundred and one strokes for curfew, and we reached the gates just as they were being locked for the night. As we strolled down High Street in the moonlight, with the beautiful towers standing out against the still glowing west, I longed to stay on forever in dear old Oxford; but, alas! to-morrow we go on our way and I must say goodbye to these dear new friends.

Write to me, Tom, and tell me who wins the Regatta, and don't forget to give my love to Rafe and Jimmy and all the others. What fun our crowd used to have in those old days when we were all young!

RYE, N. Y.

Dear Bess:—

Who was the man you went walking with in Oxford? I should like to know what your mother was thinking of to let you go strolling about in the moonlight with some one you know nothing about. You need a brother to look after you. I do not approve of girls mooning about listening to nightingales and watching the moon rise in romantic spots. Neither do I approve of flirtations with ships' doctors. Every one knows that all they are for is to jolly up seasick girls. They are notorious flirts.

I suppose, filled as you are with all the romance of that musty old Oxford, you will not care to hear about our exceedingly young little colleges over here. But perhaps you will be interested to know, if you have not already heard, that Harvard had the impudence to beat us. Of course it was a mistake. Chambers was not fit to row and the tide was wrong, and the steamers chopped up the water, and there were a thousand things against us, but, of course, it's a terrible thing and we fellows feel as if there had been a funeral in the family.

The worst of it was, I took Mildred Somers—you know I told you. I gave her five hundred violets and a Yale pin and no end of trophies, and she actually had the gall to wear them. What do you think she did? There we were, among all the Yale crowd—whole car solid blue—and what did that girl do when she saw Harvard was winning but throw away the violets and rip out a red flag and let out a regular howl for Harvard! The next week she announced her engagement to the captain of the Harvard crew! She apologized after the race and said she was so excited she did not know what she was doing and all that, but *imagine* my feelings. I think girls are the most fickle, insincere creatures in the world.

Yours,

TOM BURTON.

STRATFORD-ON-AVON.

What a grumbler you are, Tom Burton! I don't know why you should take it upon yourself to tell me what is proper, even if you *have* known me ever since you wore knickerbockers and we used to go fishing with bent pins. That was really a very amusing story about Mildred Somers, but it was just like her. I am sorry, Tommie; it was hard luck, but you must not mind if I laugh. It *was* so funny.

As far as "the man" goes, you are quite mistaken if you think it is some one about whom I know nothing. I know him very well and mother approves of him highly. He has been with us off and on ever since we reached dear old England.

We are lingering here in lovely War-

wickshire, loath to go away. We were at Leamington for several days as a headquarters for Kenilworth, Warwick and Stratford, but we finally came over here to the Red Horse Inn, so that we might really live for a little while in the town where Shakespeare lived and dreamed and loved so long ago. I have seen the sun set from the banks of the winding Avon, and have been to service in Holy Trinity, and have walked all about this charming country; have even sat on the stile over which poor young Willie Shakespeare is supposed to have fallen on the famous night of his poaching trip in Charlecote Park.

Our favorite walk (for again *that man*, as you call him, is with us) is the footpath across the fields from Stratford to Shottery—a path between hawthorn hedges and through fields of poppies, the path that Shakespeare always took when he went to see Anne Hathaway. It is a charming place and to me it is always haunted by flitting ghosts of Rosalind and Juliet and Portia and all the other lovely women who may have been already hovering about in the poet's mind even when he was going to court his Anne.

I cannot bear the thought of ever leaving England, Tommie. It just satisfies me, and the vision of smoky, dirty, crude New York that sometimes obtrudes itself, is very hateful to me. Don't be surprised if I never come back to America. I should like to dream away my life in lovely Warwickshire.

Affectionately,

BESS.

CHESTER.

Dear Tom:—

I have not heard from you for two weeks, but I shall heap coals of fire on your head by writing just the same. We finally tore ourselves away from romantic Stratford and came up here to Chester on our way to the English Lakes. Chester is the dearest, quaintest bit of the Old World imaginable. Think of living in a walled town! How can people go on prosaically buying and selling and living and dying in such a spectacular bit of scenery? Think of selling your goods contentedly and as if it were quite the

most natural thing in the world in those queer old Rows with a crypt underneath that goes back no one knows how many hundreds of years! Think, Tommie, of living in a house bearing the date 1003, or in another with "God's providence is our inheritance" across the front, and perhaps having in your cellar relics of the Romans! Why, it's absurd! It all ought to be put away in a glass case, just to be looked at. And yet these people go on being born and married and dying just as if they were in some stupid little new town in America.

That friend of ours ran up yesterday to join us at the Grosvenor, in time to go with me to evensong in the cathedral. It was one of the most impressive services I ever went to, although there were hardly a dozen people in the nave and but a few more in the choir. The afternoon light falling richly through the stained glass, the music rolling up into that magnificent roof, the voices of the choir coming softly from the distance—oh, Tom, it was heavenly! These old cathedrals make you feel so *good*!

In the evening, in a marvelous sunset, we strolled up on the old wall around back of the cathedral and past King Charles' Tower. And then I thought of you, far away off to the west. The mountains over in Wales were silhouetted against the sky and my thoughts went back to that summer you were with us up at Hotel Champlain, for there plainly before my eyes I saw the Camel's Hump and old Mansfield. I leaned on the stone parapet and thought of those jolly old days in that beautiful place. Will you ever forget those pine woods and the cliffs above the lake, with the Green Mountains looming up across the water and behind us the grand old Adirondacks?

I forgot where I was, I forgot everything, as I leaned there, until I came back suddenly and found myself in that old, old bit of England, with the sunset faded to dull violet, and my companion quite bored to death by my long silence. You see, I do not forget my old friends even when I am with—certain people over here.

Affectionately,
BESS.

172 BROADWAY, NEW YORK.

My dear Bess:—

Don't torture me with memories of those beautiful old days. I ought to be grateful, perhaps, that you even gave me a thought when you were out in the sunset with him, but I am *not* content with a thought. I think it would better all end here. I won't be content with your friendship. I must have all or nothing, Bess, and I see now that it must be nothing. God knows I love you, dear, but I cannot stand the torture I have been through since you went away, and since you first wrote me of that other man. I never realized until then that I had been loving you all my life.

If I were not sure that you cared for him, and gave me only a passing thought as an old friend, I would take the next steamer, but I cannot bear the thought of finding some one else in the place where I long to be. Good-bye, dear Bess. This is not *au revoir*—I expect to sail in two or three weeks for South America. The firm wants a man to look after its interests down there and I am only too glad to go, though under any other circumstances I should as soon bury myself alive as go to that God-forsaken spot. Good-bye. Sometimes give a thought to

Your devoted

TOM.

Cablegram.

To Mr. Thomas Burton, 172 Broadway,
NEW YORK.

Don't go to South America. Wait for letter.
E. R. DUNCAN.

WINDERMERE.

Tom, dear Tom:—

How *can* I explain it all to you and tell you that I was only teasing, dear. For that obnoxious other man was only my dear old Uncle Peter. Forgive me, Tommie. It was partly your fault. I was a little bit—well—not *exactly* jealous, when you wrote about your good times and taking Mildred Somers to the Regatta and all, and when I found you really took the *man* seriously I had a foolish desire to keep on teasing. I did not mean to hurt you, Tom.

Please take the very first steamer and come over here. Do you know I have not seen a single beautiful thing except I have longed to have you with me to share it? I have been so lonely without you, mighty lonely, Tommie Burton, and if you only come I'll not tease you ever again, but I'll show you how nice I *can*

be. You just come and see. We will wait for you at Keswick, only don't be long, dearest. England will be even better when you're here. Listen while I whisper something just for you to hear —I love you, Tommie Burton.

Yours always,

BESS.

According to Calendar

BY CARROLL WATSON RANKIN

Little Sidney Marsh was glowing with the enthusiasm of the born bargain hunter, because, for some unexplained reason, he had been able to purchase for three copper cents an article for which he had fully expected to disburse an entire silver quarter.

This article was a calendar to be presented as a birthday gift to the loveliest young woman of his acquaintance. Nine-year old Sidney, however, did not consider the calendar, in its original state, sufficiently embellished for so charming a person as his dear Miss Helen; so, in order to make it more fitting, he further adorned its already somewhat too gorgeous exterior with scrap-book pictures, before carrying it, proudly, to the lady he admired.

"It's perfectly lovely," cried pretty Helen, kissing Sidney on both of his round, red cheeks. "I'll toss this old dusty one right into the fire, and every day when I look at this beautiful new one hanging in its place, I'll think of you."

"I *knew* you'd like it," returned Sidney, squirming delightedly. "You won't use any other, *will* you, Miss Helen?"

"Of course I won't," promised Helen, lightly. "Nobody ever believes the dates I put on my letters anyway; but after this, I'll take them all from your calendar, Sidney, and then everybody will see a great improvement. See, I've hung it right over my desk."

It is quite probable that somewhere on the globe there existed another mortal with as happy a disposition as Helen's;

but in her own little circle the girl was unique. Her brown eyes beamed perpetual contentment, her lips lent themselves readily to laughter and she sounded quite as cheerful as she looked. Her voice, not particularly strong and utterly untrained, was wonderfully sweet and absolutely true, which was fortunate for the family, because Helen sang from morning until night. Her older sister, Susan, was more of a trial; for, although her voice was stronger, she knew only one song, which was "Just as the Sun Went Down."

Susan's sun, however, never went down as a properly conducted sun should go. Instead, it hung suspended just above the horizon for a long, breathless interval and then dropped, with a sudden crash, to land invariably in the wrong spot. Moreover, it was not unlike a contrary hen in that it never stayed set; for Susan's sun had an uncanny habit of rising again at unseasonable hours, for the sole purpose, seemingly, of going down again.

Helen was trying to live up to a theory. She held that most persons took too much heed for the morrow and left too little to chance—Helen *liked* things left to chance, but Susan did not. It was Susan, not Helen, who worried herself thin planning a Sunday School picnic. It was Susan, too, who had had nervous prostration after arranging a booth for a church bazaar.

"What's the use," light-hearted Helen would ask, "of planning things so carefully? If one doesn't make plans there won't be any to gang agley—whatever

that is. When I keep house I sha'n't keep saying, 'Now, to-morrow will be Monday and I must do so and so,' or 'To-morrow will be Tuesday and I must do this and that.' I shall let all my to-morrows take care of themselves."

"Yes," said practical Susan, "and your Sundays'll find you without anything in the house to eat. I'd like to know where you and mother'd be if I *didn't* plan."

"But you do," returned Helen, gently. "You plan hard enough to run a whole empire in war time, instead of a modest

were taking care of her and the moderate income left by Nicholas Gridly.

It was really Susan, however, no longer a pink baby, but a tall, sober-minded and rather plain young woman, who took care of everything and everybody; making, as Helen said, much more work of it than was really necessary. Helen, of course, helped—in an emergency. Helen could always be counted on to help—but, at twenty-six, Susan was already finding gray hairs, while Helen was finding difficulty in persuading her friends to believe that she was really as



DRAWN BY EMILE NELSON

"I knew you'd like it."

family of three in one small cottage. Why not leave an opening for chance? Something really exciting might happen once in awhile if you did."

It was certainly owing to the painstaking efforts of over-careful Susan that the Gridly breakfasts were served in the morning instead of at night, for nothing but the family darning was expected of Mrs. Gridly, a delightfully vague, helpless little body, who discovered one day that she had somehow changed places with her two pink babies and that they

much as twenty-four and engaged to be married.

The wedding day was set for the twenty-fifth of October. To Susan's consternation, haphazard Helen announced that she intended to make all arrangements for the great event herself. Susan, having small faith in her sister's ability, hoped fervently that Helen would change her mind as the time approached; but Helen, with an exalted, if somewhat mistaken idea of saving detail-loving Susan extra worry and labor, was firm.

"No," said Helen, "it's *my* wedding and I'm going to do the planning—that is, what little planning there is to do. It's all nonsense to make a great big fuss getting ready for a ten minutes' ceremony. It's to be a nice, home-y, informal little affair. I want it to seem as if it had just sort of happened offhand instead of having been all tabulated and blocked out by diagrams on paper. You see, a white, home-made muslin frock and a grand, conventional wedding wouldn't go at all well together."

"Still, I could do the planning——"

"You could, darling Susykins, but you're not going to. If I catch you even *looking* as if you were planning, I'll elope."

"But you're absolutely certain to forget *something*."

"I know it, dearie, but I couldn't forget Edward, *nobody* could forget Dr. Breen, and here am I—what more would you want for a wedding? No, ma'am! This is my grass and you're to keep off. You see, there'll have to be enough left of *you* to keep house afterwards. Bless you, do you s'pose I've forgotten how you lost four nights' sleep, used up a whole lead pencil and all my best paper drawing up plans and specifications for making the family chairs go round the sewing circle, and then nearly died afterwards of chagrin because the minister came unexpectedly and had to sit on the table? I've got to save you from yourself, sweet Susan. You're not even to worry about the weather——"

"But," protested Susan, "the almanac says it's going to rain all the last half of October, and the weather bureau——"

"Then I'll buy a new umbrella," returned Helen, serenely. "So glad you mentioned it—I hadn't thought of an umbrella. Now just remember that you're to leave everything to me but the cake. I'll do all the worrying and you can do the baking—and you're not to think of *that* until I give you permission. Leave it all to me and we'll show people how to have a wedding that *is* a wedding. Above *everything*, I want it informal."

Even Helen, however, had never hoped to have it as informal as it proved to be.

All through the autumn, Helen, singing

happily, sewed on fluffy, lace trimmed garments, tossing them, when finished, in a fleecy pile on the spare room bed. Susan, with an anxious pucker between her brows, surreptitiously counted the completed garments and found, to her astonishment, that the supply was likely to prove adequate to the demand, even if Helen had shown a fine scorn of the conventional dozens. But this lack of system worried Susan.

"Dear me," she lamented, when Helen came in, one day, from her shopping, with seven pairs of lisle-thread hose, "I *couldn't* begin my married life with seven pairs of stockings!"

"No, you dear cut-and-dried Susykins," said Helen, hanging the fourteen dangling stockings over her arm, preparatory to carrying them upstairs, "of course you couldn't. You'd either have to give one pair away or buy five more. All *my* dozens contain anywhere from ten to seventeen units and my half dozens are quite as elastic."

"But how shall you know," queried Susan, "if you happen to lose anything?"

"That's the beauty of it—I *sha'n't* know. Do you imagine that I want to spend all my married life keeping those dozens intact? Not much. I'm going to keep myself bright and lovely for Edward. Do you think he wants me to greet him like this? 'Oh, Ned! I'm short one pillow-case!' or 'Oh, Ned! try, *try* to remember where you lost one of your handkerchiefs—there's one missing,' or 'Oh, Ned! What shall I do? There's one finger-bowl doily gone from my yellow set.'"

Helen's manner was such an exact imitation of that of a certain fussy neighbor that Susan stopped worrying long enough to go into peals of laughter.

From time to time, perturbed Susan would think of things that she was certain that Helen had either forgotten or overlooked. Had Helen remembered to make sure that the clergyman would be in town for the occasion? Had it occurred to her to send a line to Aunt Loretta? Had she thought to ask Edward for the names of all his relatives, so that announcement cards would reach them? Had she decided whether she wanted olives or pre-

served ginger for the wedding supper, and did she know how many extra teaspoons it would be necessary to borrow?

Indeed, so little confidence had orderly-minded Susan in her sister's ability that she even waked peacefully-slumbering Helen, one night, to ask if she had remembered to write to Edward, the prospective bridegroom, who lived at a distance, the exact date of his wedding day.

"Susan!" murmured sleepy Helen, turning her pillow with wrathful emphasis, "if there's one date that I've succeeded in impressing on *everybody's* mind, it's Wednesday, October 25th."

As the time approached, everything appeared to be going smoothly. Helen, bent upon showing doubting Susan that a wedding, in spite of the popular supposition to the contrary, was the easiest form of entertainment imaginable, wore a serene brow, and her scraps of song were sweeter than ever. Although Susan's sun went down and came up again with even more alarming frequency than usual during the busy days preceding the wedding, even she finally became almost convinced that everything was coming out as well as if she herself had planned it.

Helen had suspected that there might be wedding presents and there were; but they surpassed her expectations in number, in beauty, and especially in the promptness of their arrival.

"Why!" lamented Helen, opening Aunt Loretta's spoons on Saturday, "there won't be anything left to live for except Edward, between now and next Wednesday. I think every gift I'm entitled to is already in this house. It's odd that everybody should have sent them so soon—particularly when the weather has been so outrageous. I'd swap Uncle Peter's soup ladle for a scrap of blue sky."

"The almanac said it would rain," returned Susan, "and I told you—"

"Oh, there's the doorbell," cried Mrs. Gridly, to whom Helen had relegated the pleasant task of arranging the gifts on various small tables. "If it's another wedding present I don't know where I'll put it."

It was not a present, however, but a

thunderbolt. Stout Mrs. Miller did not look like a thunderbolt, but she proved to be one.

"By the way, Helen," said the visitor, when the greetings were over, "it has just occurred to me that when you invited me to your wedding"—the invitations had been given verbally—"you said Wednesday, the 25th."

"Yes," returned Helen, cheerfully, "I did."

"But, Helen," objected Mrs. Miller, "the 25th is Sunday—are you going to be married on Sunday or on Wednesday?"

"What!" gasped Helen, always a little vague as to dates. "Isn't to-day Saturday?"

"Yes; Saturday, the 24th."

"You *must* be mistaken," cried Helen, showing, in her sudden alarm, a hitherto unsuspected resemblance to Susan. "My calendar said, when I looked at it this morning, 'Saturday, the 21st.' I've just *lived* with that calendar for days and I know the whole month of October by heart!"

"I'm *not* mistaken," persisted the visitor. "To-day's my birthday and I *know* it's the 24th. I guess when one's had fifty-six birthdays one gets to know when to expect 'em."

"But the calendar—"

"Let's see your calendar. Why, it *does* say the 21st, but bless me, girls, it can't be right—My goodness! Look at this!"

With a hairpin, investigating Mrs. Miller had pried from its place one of the little scrap-book pictures that small Sidney Marsh had inadvertently pasted over the date, 1899.

The mystery was a mystery no longer. Thanks to young Sidney and his bargain-sale purchase, the Gridly family had regulated its affairs for several of the most important weeks of its existence, by a five-year-old calendar.

"Then, when—when *am* I going to be married?" asked Helen, looking helplessly from her mother to Mrs. Miller and Susan. "When *is* my wedding day?"

"You haven't any," said Susan.

"To-morrow," replied Mrs. Miller, "if you go by the date; next Wednesday if you go by the day. I *thought* it was strange you'd choose Sunday."



DRAWN BY EMILE NELSON

"The mystery was a mystery no longer."



DRAWN BY EMILIE NELSON

"Helen herself never looked happier."

"Dear me," groaned Helen, "what an awful mix! The ice-cream, the salad and the minister are all ordered for the 25th, and the people invited for Wednesday—no, the refreshments and Edward—why, goodness! Edward said he'd be here the afternoon of the 24th—that's to-day!"

"That looks like Edward coming up the walk *now!*" cried dismayed Susan, who stood facing the window. "And there's Dr. Breen right behind him!"

Quick-witted Helen rushed to the door, whisked Edward into the secluded library and left Susan to welcome the elderly

clergyman, who had been more deliberate in climbing the steps—Edward, indeed, had taken them at one joyous bound.

"Ah, good afternoon, Miss Susan," said Dr. Breen, taking Susan's small, trembling hand. "It's pleasant to see the sun trying to shine after all the rain we've been having. I just came in to have a rather curious little matter straightened out. I didn't notice it at first, but the date and the day mentioned in your sister's note do not—ah—coincide——"

"*Nothing* coincides," said Helen, emerging from the library, with her eyes dancing and her cheeks unduly flushed.

"Do come in and tell us what to do. Edward supposed the wedding was to be Monday—it seems I didn't mention Wednesday—and my fives and sixes always *do* look alike."

"Well," suggested Dr. Breen, when everything had been explained, "I've another wedding on hand that will call me out of town next Wednesday, so you'd better arrange to have yours sooner."

"I'm afraid I'll *have* to have it sooner," faltered Helen. "That ice-cream's coming on the eight o'clock train to-night, and it won't keep for more than twenty-four hours. Oh, Edward, you *don't* mind an informal wedding—or having it hurried up to save the ice-cream, do you?"

"Not in the least," returned Edward, whose eyes were twinkling delightedly. "We couldn't wait until Wednesday, anyway, without shortening our wedding trip—a fortnight is all the firm would give me. I'm rather glad your fives *do* look like sixes."

"Then it's all right. We'll be married to-night, instead of at noon next Wednesday—or—or to-morrow, or Monday," said Helen, taking a roll of paper from her pocket and handing it to Susan. "Now, you go to town, Edward, and get the license—and five pounds of coffee. Susan, you go next-door and telephone half the people on this list. Mrs. Miller, if you'll telephone the rest from your house, I'll send Johnny Blake to tell those we can't reach by 'phone."

"But, Helen!" objected Susan, her words coming in gasps, "we never—the cake isn't baked—the decorations—the dishes—the—"

"Now, don't worry," soothed Helen. "*Everybody* bakes on Saturday—I'll just borrow their cake and bread. Get a lot of the girls in to help make sandwiches and pick flowers and we'll have the finest sort of a wedding here at half-past eight, this very night. We'll stand right here in this corner where we always put the Christmas tree, and in three hours from now you won't have anything left to worry about."

Singularly enough, Helen's hastily prepared wedding was afterwards remembered as being an exceedingly pretty, well-managed affair. Kindly neighbors took possession of the kitchen and dining room, the hardy hydrangeas in their gardens were stripped of their huge, snowy panicles of bloom, and the willing hands of Helen's girl friends made the Christmas tree corner a bower fit for any bride. Helen herself, in her white gown, with her cheeks flushed, her eyes bright, had never looked prettier nor happier; for all the guests had been notified in time, the borrowed cakes proved adequate, and everybody—except Susan, who still looked bewildered—was satisfied.

"Never mind, precious Susykins," whispered Helen, on the way to the train, "when your turn comes, dear, I'll plan a perfectly lovely, proper, conventional wedding that'll more than make up for all the usual plans we didn't make for this one."

"No, you won't," retorted Susan, with unexpected spirit. "I'll do my own planning. I don't admire the solitary sample I've seen of yours. As like as not, you'd get me married to the wrong man!"

Under the New Moon

BY ALDIS DUNBAR

"I shall wait for you at the top," remarked Mrs. Chevening, her hand on the rail of the steep, uneven flight of steps that clung to the face of the bluff. "Being out of breath is so horribly unbecoming to me that I'll spare you the sight by running up ahead of you. Then I'll have time to recover, while you two children, with consciences unspoiled by indulgence, are stowing away the 'rippling skiff.' Come up at your leisure. I shall be grateful for any respite."

Laughing over her shoulder, she left them and ran up the rude stair with a swift certainty that gave no hint of exertion.

Lesley Barron looked after the splendid, supple figure with wistful eyes; then she turned to her companion.

"What shall I do when she goes abroad again, this autumn? She offered to leave the keys of the cottage with me, so that I could come out here whenever I chose to; but I could not bear the loneliness, with a thought of her in every room. There is no one like Joan, is there?" she went on, as if strong in assurance of sympathy. "Her very poise in walking is free as a breeze. When I am with her I fall instinctively into the same long, swinging cadence. You may laugh, but merely to keep step with her makes me feel that I, too, could go forth and conquer."

"I'm not laughing," replied Thane, quietly. "I can understand perfectly how you feel. I've not seen you together, since her return to America, for nothing. By the way, our fair *chatelaine* has left her belongings for us to carry up."

"Nothing but her sketch-book and parasol," kindled Lesley, catching them up, as with one last shove Thane sent the light rowboat under cover. "Joan knows how I love to take care of odds and ends for her. I only wish that there were larger things to do. *You* can't comprehend how such trifles have any importance, can you?"

Without waiting for his response, she, too, went toward the steps and began to ascend slowly, her dainty head bent a little, for the low sun, just sinking behind a bank of clouds in the west, sent a blinding shimmer across the water.

There was a boyish gleam of resentment in Thane's half-closed brown eyes, but a trace of amusement in the lines of the sensitive mouth, as he thrust something white farther into the pocket of his flannel blouse, locked the door and followed, leaving the low boathouse alone with sunset and the rising wind.

"Are you tired?" he asked, overtaking Miss Barron as she paused at the hallway stage, where there was a narrow bench. "Sit here and rest for a minute. I was afraid that I was letting you row too far."

"But you did not. I am not in the least weary," she replied, even as she complied. "Joan forbade us to hurry."

"If Mrs. Chevening told you to throw yourself over the bluff, would you feel that you must do it?"

"Wouldn't you, in my place?" she retorted, glancing up at him with a rare smile, in which her one dimple came and went like an elusive shadow. "Confess that you enjoy obeying her—just as I do."

"Obeying—or—humoring?" suggested Thane. A flash of gray eyes alone betrayed that she had heard.

"If you were on the path between here and the cottage, when she gave the command, it would mean a straight plunge into the lake," continued Lesley, "unless a tree was kind enough to bar the way, near the top. There is no beach at all, to the west of the boathouse. That is why they didn't build it closer to the cottage. I showed you how the waves had eaten under the bluff. It is like that for miles, and the water is very deep, close to land. But how beautiful it is, here, at sunset!"

For a time both were silent, looking westward along the masses of rich foliage,

tipped with golden light, that crowned the high, bold line of the lake shore as far as eye could follow it. In the stillness they could hear the lapping of water against the landing of the boathouse, directly beneath. From out the north-west great swarthy clouds were rushing

broke off without finishing her question, and started up the second flight.

"Why hurry?" asked Thane, lingering on the little platform. "We've a full hour of light, yet. There's no power strong enough to drag Chevening or your brother in to dinner until it's



DRAWN BY F. DE FORREST SCHOOK

'She began to ascend slowly.'

up the luminous, radiant sky like giants—kings, not of rain-storm, but of the wind.

"No," was Denzil Thane's conclusion. "Much as I admire Mrs. Chevening, I play no hazard with life while the world holds a view like this."

"In other words, you rank the enjoyment of a landscape above—" She

too dark to see the tennis net."

"Have we changed moods?" asked Lesley. "Stay, if you will. I often climb up and down here, without escort. And then—Joan is at the top, waiting."

When they reached the path which slanted down to meet the boathouse

stair, however, there was no white figure among the dark pines that made so strong an accent in the vivid belt of maples and chestnuts.

"Joan!" called Lesley. "Joan!"

There was no sound.

"Joan, where are you hiding from us?"

Then came sudden, light laughter from behind them.

"I was waiting for that," averred Joan Chevening, putting aside the bushes that had concealed her.

"For what?" asked Thane.

"For a question. I shall have my wish granted, now. You're not superstitious, Denny, and can't sympathize with me. I caught sight of the new moon, and wished—of course I shall not tell what. I wouldn't get it, if I did. But you—you should really try it. Wish at your first glimpse of the crescent, then keep silent until you have been asked a question. The wish will certainly come true. Eh, Les?"

"It must!" Lesley was peering up among the boughs. "But where is the moon?"

"I saw it. That's enough. You may do the same when we come to the open field, on the way back to the cottage. Have your wishes ready. Oh, you brought up my things? Dear girl, you are a jewel! Isn't she, Denny?" Her arm encircled Lesley as she spoke.

Denzil Thane assented absently. He was feeling in his pocket.

"Aren't these your gloves, Miss Barron?" he asked, holding out the white ball. "I found them—lying in the boat."

He looked at her with a keen, whimsical smile, but it was Joan Chevening, acute of perception where Lesley was concerned, who was aware of a sudden tremor as the bits of white silk, warm from their hiding place, touched the girl's hand—Joan Chevening who saw the droop of dark eyelashes. For an instant the protecting clasp grew closer.

"Come, Denny," she suggested, carelessly. "Saunter on with me and carry my sketch-book. I want Les to find me a handful of maidenhair for the dinner table, to-night. I looked everywhere, without success."

Thane hesitated, but Mrs. Chevening

laid her hand on his arm. "Come," she said in a low, imperative tone, "I want you."

"Ought we to leave Miss Barron alone?" he objected, as Joan led the way toward the footpath at the edge of the bluff. "Of course it's not dark—and"—looking back at the slight, motionless figure in the dusk of the pines—"she doesn't seem in any haste to join us."

"She'll find the ferns in a few minutes," returned Mrs. Chevening, pausing until he was at her side, then going on slowly. "Surely you have no objection? She loves to do such things for me. You see, I'm in a mood for plain speech. Is it that you resent my influence over her? Let me tell you that she has more strength of character than you dream. Fully as much as I, if the truth were seen."

"Yet she would thrust her hand into fire at your bidding," said Thane.

"True. She has known me for years, and in spite of that there is no *arrière pensée* in her utter love and trust where I am in question. No one will ever gain her favor by depreciating me. I am frank, you see. Did you—perhaps—quarrel about me?" watching his clear-cut profile with sweet amusement.

"Assuredly not," replied Thane. "Have we not agreed that you are better bread than is made from wheat? We are on the best of terms. Hopelessly good."

"So!" Surprise was in her tone, but none in her glance at him.

"Fair lady," he went on, with an attempt at lightness, "one can battle with indifference or with dislike, and run a chance of success. Flint and steel may well strike fire. But who can contend with perfect friendliness, that sees nothing but its own reflection before it? It is imperturbable. It says, 'Thus far. No farther!' and will not be gainsaid."

Joan Chevening halted suddenly and faced him with a superb gesture of impatient scorn.

"*Dieu!*" she exclaimed, almost under her breath. "And I gave you credit for reading her clearly! So indifference might be conquered? The semblance of



DRAWN BY F. DE FORREST SCHOOK

"She had caught the collar of his coat." See page 386

it, I admit; but that is the shield of temperaments widely differing from hers. Strange—in a hundred ways you betray the hypersensitive perception of the artist—yet you lack intuition to realize by what supreme self-restraint the more subtle barrier is guarded! Imperturbable? when there is not a careless phrase of yours that she cannot repeat? no fleeting expression or gesture that escapes her? Last night you were laughing over those French caricatures with me, while she played softly—music that you sometimes play. Do you think that she lost an inflection of our voices—that she could not say: 'Here his hand lay. Against that fold of the curtain he leaned his head,'—now, or in a hundred years? It would be the same to her. She will never forget."

"Mrs. Chevening—you mean——"

"I mean that I have lost my temper—have spoken too frankly, because I like you, and because your pride recoils at a hazard which other men would ignore or brush away as trivial. Is it lack of money that stands between? I tell you, if I were to be left alone and penniless—even if I were under some heavy cloud—no force could keep her from me, from giving up all that she has to work for me. That is Lesley! And I was fool enough to wish—heavens, man! must *she* break down the wall? No! I shall take her away, to England, with me. She shall be shown that there are other people in the world."

"Yet she leaves—us—on such slight excuses?"

"She should be—jealous?" The beautiful face grew soft. "Not of me. The queen can do no wrong. Queer, isn't it? But there's indomitable pride in it, as well. I might monopolize you entirely, and she would never lift a finger to attract you from me. Walk on slowly. She is coming."

Denzil Thane obeyed, half mechanically.

"Forgive me, but—how can I dare to let myself be convinced—even by you? I cannot but think you mistaken, from what I have seen."

Mrs. Chevening gave a little shrug. He might not believe; he would not be

able to forget. "Have it as you will," she said. "It is always a grave mistake to be in earnest, eh, Lesley?" as a soft hand slipped under her arm. "When you are as old as I am, you will know that. Oh, you may have counted as many years as I, but what have years to do with age? I have seen venerable nuns who were actual children in all essentials, and little *gamins* who could have given lessons to Methuselah in knowledge of the world. Ah! The maidenhair? Let me have it. Wait! Hush!" she commanded. "Keep silence, instantly, both of you! But have a care where you step. This path runs too near the verge for safety. Now look up, toward your left, and wish!"

They had reached the clearing, where the narrow, overgrown footpath emerged into an open field, which it skirted on the extreme edge of the bluff. There, in the exquisite western sky, hung a curved line of lucent glory, warmer than silver, paler than gold.

All the birds were hushed, but from the shadow of low bushes that fringed the bluff to the right, from the trees that grew farther down, concealing the lake and sheltering them from the wind, came the soft, plaintive thrill of the hylas. Beyond the field, half hidden by an orchard, was the dark red roof of the Chevenings' cottage.

Almost imperceptibly, Joan Chevening drew away from her companions, mischief in her dark eyes, in the curves of her lovely mouth.

"I go! Farewell! In truth, I am too frivolous for such grave company!" and with long, buoyant steps, like those of a boy, she went from them, trailing her creamy skirt over the stubble and grass with serene unconcern.

Lesley caught her breath, avoiding the eyes of Denzil Thane. She waited for him to break the silence. Strange, he moved slowly beside her, along the path, without a word. Was he offended by Joan's unceremonious desertion? Her lips parted, then closed, as a memory brought hot color to her cheeks. Thane took off his hat, letting it hang down in his hand. The evening was warm, in spite of the wind which stirred the leaves

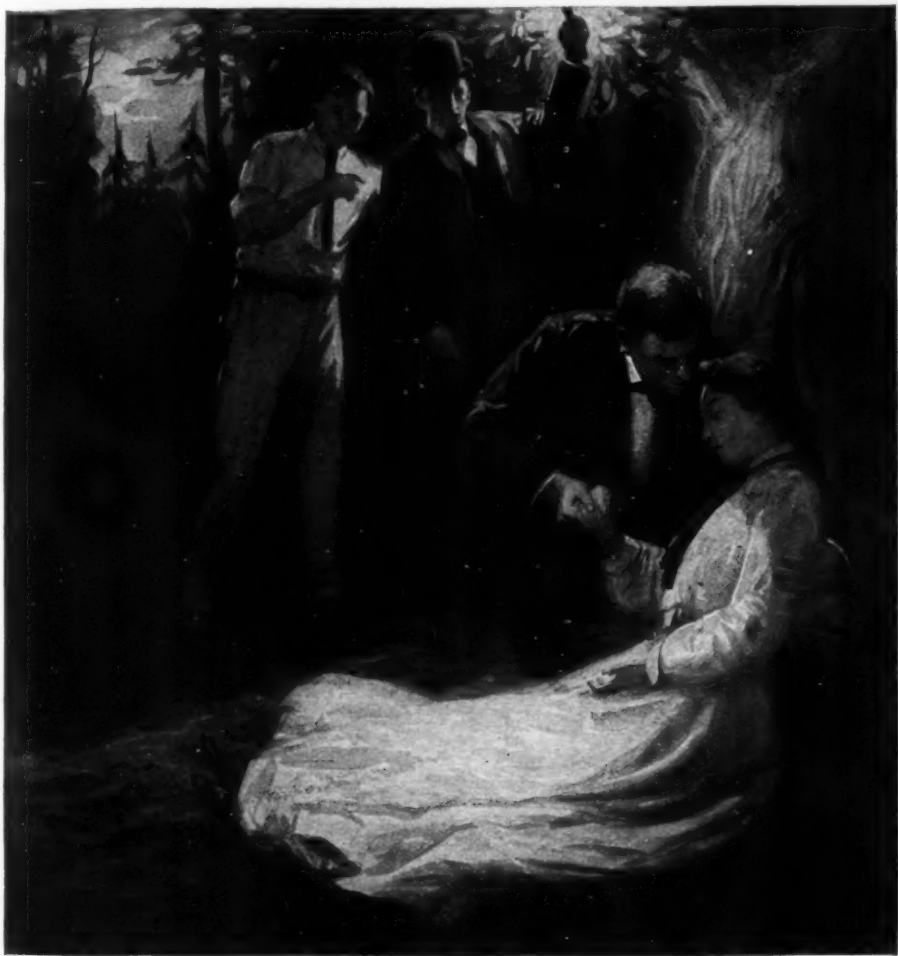
in the tree-tops. She stole a glance at the wave of hair on his forehead. Joan *might* have stayed. If she had been Joan, Thane would have been led into making some remark before this. Joan would have resorted to any stratagem, rather than lose a wish, even when she

among the weeds. Thane bent quickly.

"Lesley! Are you——"

Crash! Then sounds of earth and stones rattling down the overhanging precipice!

"Denzil!" For an instant Lesley could not cry his name aloud. Hur-



DRAWN BY F. DE FORREST SCHOOK

"Suddenly the world came back to her." See page 387

knew in her heart how impossible a dream it was. She could imagine Joan pretending to trip.

Fate may be in a twisted root, hidden among dry leaves. The fancy had not shaped itself, when the girl's heel caught, sending her down

riedly she leaned over the edge, where fresh brown earth had broken away under heedless feet—dreading—that she might see nothing. But there, stayed in its fall by a narrow ledge, some thirty feet below, lay something dark—motionless. Even in the half light she could

see how insecure was the obstruction.

"Don't move!" she cried. "Don't stir a muscle! Denzil! *Don't* move or try to help! I'm coming!" She rose to her knees. "Joan! Joan! Come back!"

Far off in the field the white figure paused—turned.

"Joan! Hurry!"

"Coming!" echoed ringing back to her; but when Joan Chevening reached the spot, Lesley had slipped off her belt and was buckling it around a sapling that projected from the brow of the cliff.

"He can't have fallen?"

Lesley's eyes were dark with fear. "My fault, Joan. I—stumbled. He has not fallen far, but he dare not move to help himself. You are strong enough to lift me, if need be. Hold this, and let me down as far as you can. If I reach that birch tree I can prevent his slipping over the bluff until you bring Tom and Cecil."

"Lesley! I can do it more surely! Child, I have twice your endurance!"

"Endurance!"

Joan Chevening was dumb. For once the will in those gray eyes dominated her own. Without a word she was over the brink, her left arm slipped through the leathern loop, her right hand gripping the soft one that clung to it as Lesley Barron, tense in every nerve, swung herself down the steep. Fear for herself was nowhere. All her soul was concentrated in the effort to gain the trunk of the crooked white birch without dislodging even the tiniest handful of earth. She let go Joan's hand. The white birch was just below her. Beyond it—was the dearest thing in all the world.

"Don't move!" she breathed. Nearer and nearer she crept. Was it an hour before her arm was locked about the base of the tree, her body flung close to the crumbling earth, her hand clenched in a fold of rough woolen?

"Down, Les?" came the call from above.

"All safe. Ropes, Joan."

"I know. Hold on fast, dear. Hold on! Hold on!" the clear voice grew fainter.

From where she lay, Lesley could not see Thane's face. She had caught the

collar of his coat, half dragged off by the underbrush that had retarded his fall. A mere fragment of rock, loosened by the impact, was all that had saved him. At any moment it might give way. Should he stir, the sudden movement would risk sending them both to destruction.

Far beneath she could hear those gleaming, pitiless waves beating at the base of the cliff, driven by the rising wind that soughed in the branches. The afterglow in the sky was fading to palest sapphire. Was it the same sky that had glowed above their heads at sunset? Was all this a dream?

A few stones fell softly.

"Oh, God, don't let him move!" she was speaking half unconsciously. "Don't let my strength fail him! Make them come quickly! If I could only be in his place. Dear God, if a life must be given, let it be mine instead. I don't matter—much—to any one. His life is dear to so many—he can do such great things in the world. Mine means so little. If I could do that for him! Dear Lord—*please!*"

The stone against which Thane's shoulder pressed, forced gradually from its socket by his weight, moved slowly downward, slid, more swiftly. From below came a dull splash. The strain on her arm grew more intense, but her hold stiffened as it had been the grip of riveted steel.

She could not think clearly now. All the life that she could remember had been spent holding on—firmly—for love's sake. Why should great flaring lights be there, above her? Whom were loud voices calling? Stones came crashing down on either side. She would have cried out in warning, but her words died away. Still she held firmly to the rough cloth.

"Les! Brave little sister! Let go. Denny is all safe. Cecil's bracing him until he gets to his feet. We've plenty of ropes. There's no more danger. Let go, dear."

"I can't," she whispered.

Somewhere, far off, a strong hand was bending apart rigid fingers that had lost power to relax. Were they Lesley Barron's?

"All right, Thane?" Cecil Chevening's voice came from somewhere—in the abyss. "No hurry. Take time to limber up a bit. Were you stunned?"

"At first I must have been, I think." (Was *she* falling, now?) "When I knew what had happened, she had a firm grip of my coat. There was a stone or something that braced my shoulder, at first, but it slid away. After that my weight must have been——"

Suddenly the world came back to her; then, as a powerful arm slipped under her, lifting her, she sank into a great swirl of blackness.

"Move the torch away, Tom. That glare is too blinding, right over our heads. Les! Dear little Lesley? You hear, don't you? Lie still. I'm holding you, dear." Oh, the blessed safety in the clasp that was around her!

"Joan?"

"Yes?"

"My arms. Could you rub——?"

Hands, very gentle and tender, were chafing the aching wrists, almost before the words were spoken.

"Joan, did I—hold on?"

"Hush, dear. All's well. Wait." Then, louder, "Cecil, you and Tom walk back to the cottage. We'll be there by the time you've smoked a cigar apiece. Les will be all right if she's quiet for another few minutes,

and the walk will steady her nerves." Obedient footsteps died away in the darkness.

"Now, Denny, tell her. Did she hold firmly?"

"Firmly?"

Lesley's gray eyes opened wide with a start, looking straight into the brown ones that were watching her anxiously. "Love, you'll never have power to loose that hold while earth and heaven endure!"

There was a faint quiver in Joan Chevening's laugh. "Here, Denny. She belongs to you, after that. My wish was first to come true!"

"No," breathed Lesley, with a sigh of contentment as her cheek rested on an arm covered with rough woolen. "The wish I made was granted sooner!"

"Mine comes to me, above all, sweet-heart!" His face bent to the sweet, pale one, so near—then he looked up, happily, to Joan. "The barrier's away, fair lady!"

In the light of the flickering torch, Mrs. Chevening sprang to her feet, the perfect mouth again showing roguish curves.

"I go. Farewell," she repeated. "In truth, I am too grave for such frivolous company!"

Slowly she went out from under the trees, her eyes on the western sky; but the new moon had passed from sight.



A Matrimonial Escapade

BY UNA HUDSON

I wish it understood that *I* am writing this story, though it is to be revised, corrected and improved (?) by the lady who has consented to halve my joys and double my sorrows. Really, I *beg* her pardon; it's the other way round, of course, though that is a mere detail.

What is it, my dear? Oh, it is *not* a mere detail. Very well, then, it is not; it's just as you say every time.

And we wish to explain that this, our first literary venture, is not undertaken because of any unworthy greed of gold, our kind Uncle Henry's munificence having rendered the large and satisfying check we will undoubtedly receive a matter of small moment, but because, being supplied with pretty much everything else heart can desire, we yearn for fame.

It is quite proper, I think, that the story should begin with Uncle Henry, because but for Uncle Henry there would be no story.

Uncle Henry, it should be stated, has views on pretty much everything, from soul culture to Panama hats; also he has money—cart loads of it. The first mentioned he *may* be permitted to take with him when he leaves this vale of tears and disappointments and bad debts—certainly I am not in a position to make any assertion to the contrary—but Scripture saith that the latter commodity must be left behind. Which being the case, I can conceive of no reason why it shouldn't, and a good many why it should, be left with me.

Wherefore, it not unnaturally follows that, in so far as I can, I do those things that are pleasing in the sight of Uncle Henry, and leave undone those things that might be by way of giving offense.

Now, Uncle Henry believes in matrimony—for the other fellow. There is a tradition in the family that once, a very long time ago, before he grew bald and stout and acquired a taste for French cookery with an accompanying tendency toward gout, he even believed in it for

himself. But something happened to the lady in the case, whether death or marriage with another man I am unprepared to state, for concerning that chapter in his life Uncle Henry is reticent even to the point of absolute dumbness.

But even to please Uncle Henry I couldn't see my way clear to achieving matrimony on a thousand a year. We argued that matter at some length and with considerable heat, and then Uncle Henry betook himself to Europe and to some particularly efficacious mud baths.

For that which I subsequently did I am aware there can be neither extenuation nor excuse. Moreover, I was actuated only by the most sordid and unworthy of motives—lust for money.

I reasoned that if I didn't accede to Uncle Henry's wishes while he was alive I certainly couldn't hope to be conspicuously well-remembered in his will after his death, and—I cabled him that I had taken unto myself a wife.

I wasn't acting on the impulse of the moment either. It was a plan deliberately thought up and carried out in cold blood. Uncle Henry expected to remain in Europe for a year at least; before his return I intended to announce the sudden demise of my supposed wife. There you have it—simple, efficacious and convincing!

I was prepared for Uncle Henry's cabled congratulations, but not for the large check that came as his wedding gift. That made me feel small and mean—it was so like obtaining money under false pretenses.

For a week I avoided looking-glasses, for I couldn't, somehow, look myself straight in the face, and I wished with all my soul I dared send Uncle Henry's check back to him. But that was clearly out of the question, unless, indeed, I were to "fess up," and that I wasn't prepared to do.

Finally I banked the check, placing it to the credit of Mrs. Wilbur K. Eustis. Some day, I reflected sagely, there might

really be a Mrs. Wilbur K. Eustis, and we'd probably find the money most acceptable.

That little matter off my mind, I braced up and sent carefully guarded answers to Uncle Henry's inquiries as to my wife's personal appearance, disposition, *et cetera*.

Which was all very well, so far as it went, but it didn't go far enough to satisfy Uncle Henry. After a time his letters began to be full of one's duty to posterity. The inference was plain. In a moment of weakness I cabled the birth of a son and heir. Now that, had I but known it, was the psychological moment for the extinction of my family. But I am naturally tender-hearted, and I balked at murder even on paper.

Not being troubled that way myself, it didn't somehow occur to me that deep down in his heart Uncle Henry might have a fondness for little red-faced, featureless morsels of humanity. But he had, for that baby fetched him, both figuratively and literally.

He took the first steamer home and his next communication was in the shape of a telegram from New York City. That telegram filled my soul with consternation, for it announced that in something less than twenty-four hours Uncle Henry would be with me.

Twenty-four hours in which to acquire a wife and baby! Ye gods! I was so dazed I could not think.

From force of habit I went through with my morning's work, which, fortunately, happened to be a mere matter of routine, and at the usual hour went out to lunch.

I shall always believe that an all-wise Providence looks after us more tenderly than we deserve, else why did I happen to choose a seat beside Miss Bailey? Miss Bailey was a little stenographer employed in the building where I worked and I knew her by sight, having sometimes ridden up in the elevator with her.

I dropped into my chair, and she must have interpreted my very audible sigh as a conversational opening, for she looked up and recognized me with a smile.

"What's the matter?" she asked sym-

pathetically. "You look regularly done."

"I *am* done," I returned gloomily, "but not so done as I will be this time to-morrow."

There was a look in her face that seemed to invite confidence, and almost before I realized what I was doing I had blurted out the whole story.

Miss Bailey choked over her soup and did her best to stifle her laughter in her napkin.

"Forgive me," she gasped, the tears running down her cheeks. "I didn't mean to laugh, really, but it's so—so funny."

"I suppose so," I said dejectedly, "but, somehow, it doesn't appeal to my sense of humor."

Miss Bailey wiped the tears from her eyes and waved away an anxious waiter who seemed to think she was having some kind of a fit.

"Of course," she said briskly, "you'll have to murder them both."

"If I do," I said, "I'll have to produce the corpses. You seem to forget that he will be here at nine o'clock to-morrow morning."

"That's easy," said Miss Bailey cheerfully. "There's always the morgue, you know."

"Ugh!" I shivered. "No, thank you. I'm not going to burden myself with a dead wife."

"Then," said Miss Bailey, "you'll have to confess or else get a wife before nine o'clock to-morrow."

"I think," I said, "I'll be suddenly called out of the city on business."

"Nonsense," said Miss Bailey decidedly. "You'll be only putting off the evil day. How long will he stay?"

"Oh, just a few days," said I, vaguely and optimistically.

"Well," said Miss Bailey, "haven't you a cousin or somebody you could introduce as your wife?"

"Nary cousin," said I. "And I don't know any girl well enough to ask her to do a thing like that for me."

"It would be rather fun, I think," Miss Bailey said. Her eyes twinkled. "I'm said to be not altogether bad at amateur theatricals," she remarked demurely.

For a long minute I looked at her in silence. "It would be rather—er—unconventional, wouldn't it?" I suggested.

"It would be quite scandalous," she agreed cheerfully.

"Hang it," I said, "I haven't the nerve to ask you to do it."

"Then," she said, "I'll do it without being asked."

She pushed back her chair and stood up. "I'm off at five," she said, smiling down at me. "Meet me then with a carriage."

In my gratitude I could have fallen at her feet and kissed the toes of her little shoes, but I merely mumbled my incoherent thanks and fell upon my luncheon, for I had suddenly discovered that I was hungry.

At five Miss Bailey stepped into the carriage with the air of a general who doesn't even admit the possibility of defeat.

"First," she said, "we must secure a furnished flat. We would best drive to a rental agency and get a list. Six rooms, tell them; and don't forget, please, that for the time being I am Mrs. Eustis and *not* Miss Bailey."

I gasped with admiration of her mastery of the situation and meekly did her bidding. Left to myself, I must inevitably have made a mess of things, but with my pseudo wife in command I felt that all things were possible. And they were. In an incredibly short time we had found a flat to our liking, and had made all necessary arrangements for its immediate occupancy.

"Now," said my partner in deceit, "tell the man to take us to the Orphan Asylum."

"The Orphan Asylum!" I gasped.

"Unless," she amended politely, "you would prefer to get a baby somewhere else."

"Oh," I begged weakly, "can't we get along without a *baby*? *Must* we have a baby?"

"We certainly must," she said firmly. And to the Orphan Asylum we went.

I presented my card to the matron and introduced my companion as my wife.

"You see," I explained, not daring to

look at Miss Bailey, "we have no children of our own, and so we—we fancied we'd rather like to adopt one."

"We should like," supplemented Miss Bailey, "to take one for a few days on trial."

I've since thought we must have struck that Orphan Asylum at a time when they happened to be overstocked with orphan babies of the male persuasion, we had so little difficulty in securing what we wanted.

The matron seemed positively to regard us as a heaven-sent opportunity for getting rid of something she didn't want. She didn't stop to ask embarrassing questions, but ushered us at once into a room filled with little white cots and yelling, bottle-sucking infants.

Miss Bailey, with the air of a connoisseur, walked from one to another, and finally picked out a very small, moderately fat, hairless, toothless scrap of humanity. I couldn't remember ever having seen so young a baby, and I marveled at her easy, dexterous handling of him. I'm quite sure my first clutch at his tiny body would have broken him in bits.

The matron brought a nondescript sort of garment, long and voluminous, in which she wrapped the baby, an assistant handed me a bottle with a rubber attachment, and I realized that my family was an accomplished fact.

In the carriage Miss Bailey carelessly shifted the baby from her right arm to her left and gazed upon his pudgy face with an air that was distinctly proprietary.

"Isn't he sweet?" she demanded. "Such darling little hands, and such a funny bit of a nose!"

She put her head on one side and looked from the baby to me and back again at the baby.

"I believe," she decided, "he looks like you. Yes, he really does."

"The Lord forbid!" said I fervently.

Miss Bailey laughed. "I meant it as a compliment," she said. "He's a little beauty, I think."

I shrugged, but said nothing. After all, it was neither more nor less than a merciful dispensation of an all-wise Prov-

idence that women *could* go into ecstasies over featureless infants. If they couldn't—well, perhaps, then there would be cause for worrying about race suicide.

A mischievous dimple came out at the corner of Miss Bailey's mouth, and her eyes twinkled.

"Doesn't papa want to kiss his little son?" she asked, holding the baby within reach of my mustache.

"But that," she said, "you ought to be able to do without rehearsing beforehand."

It were dull and uninteresting to recount in detail how, that night, to save time, we dined on crackers and sardines, cheese and bananas eaten out of a paper sack in the pantry of our flat; how, later, I made hurried trips to and from my bachelor quarters, bringing books, clothes,



DRAWN BY D. S. GROESBECK

"Uncle Henry was washing lettuce."

See page 393

"Not on your life," I said emphatically, backing as far as the limited space at my disposal would permit.

"But you'll have to," Miss Bailey persisted, "after Uncle Henry gets here."

"And," I retorted, "after Uncle Henry gets here I'll have to kiss *you*, too." Miss Bailey blushed furiously, but she was game.

sofa pillows and photographs; how a muscular expressman brought up Miss Bailey's trunk and a perambulator; how we scattered our personal belongings broadcast throughout the flat; and how, finally, we looked upon our finished work and pronounced it good.

"This," said I, with a comprehensive wave of my hand, "would surely con-

vince the veriest doubting Thomas that ever lived. And, now, have we forgotten anything, do you think?"

"No," Miss Bailey was beginning with cheerful assurance, when suddenly a horrified expression spread over her face.

"Good gracious!" she gasped. "There's absolutely nothing to eat about the place, not even so much as a pound of flour or a potato."

But a man who in the space of three short hours could acquire a wife, and a baby, and a furnished flat wherein to put them, was not one to be dismayed by a shortage of eatables.

"That's easy," I said. "You give me a list, and I'll have the stuff here by seven to-morrow if I have to bring it myself in a wheelbarrow. You're quite sure," I said, as I stuffed the list into my pocket and picked up my hat, "that you won't be afraid here alone all night?"

"Afraid!" scoffed Miss Bailey. "How could I be? Haven't I my son here to protect me?"

She pointed toward the sofa where lay our orphan, gurgling contentedly over his bottle of milk, and we both laughed.

My bachelor quarters didn't, somehow, seem half so attractive as the cozy little flat I had just left, but that was, of course, owing to their dismantled condition.

I set my alarm clock at the unearthly hour of half-past five and got into bed, chuckling at thought of the neat little trick I was about to play Uncle Henry.

But the next morning when I met him at the train, I confess my conscience—or was it merely indigestion?—troubled me a bit. He was so unfeignedly glad to see me, and so frank in his commendation of my recent—how recent, he little guessed—matrimonial venture that I began to feel—well, not to put too fine a point upon it, like a cheat and an impostor and a blot on the face of the earth.

I threw open the door of my flat with a great flourish and announced our arrival by a loud and cheerful, "Hello, Edith, where are you?"

The little parlor seemed pleasanter than ever, and my "wife," as she came running to meet us, was certainly excuse enough even for the egregious folly of

matrimony upon a thousand a year.

Perhaps it was sheer bravado that made me kiss her before I presented Uncle Henry, and perhaps—it wasn't. She colored and laughed a bit nervously, but I thought she didn't mind—at least, not much. Then Uncle Henry kissed her, too, and I read admiration in his eyes. It was plain that he approved my choice.

"But where," he cried, "is the baby?"

I was already feeling contemptibly small and mean, but now, as I watched Uncle Henry take the orphan from Edith, it was borne in upon me that there could be no punishment proportionate to the crime of deceiving him.

He wasn't afraid of smashing that red-faced, squirming morsel. He took the uneasy bundle of white muslin and held it as a woman might, and all his great, starved, loving soul shone from his eyes when he looked down on the baby.

Something caught and tightened in my throat and my eyelids began to smart. I went over and looked out of the window and wondered savagely why Providence couldn't bestow wives and babies where they'd be loved and cherished and appreciated.

When I'd cleared my throat once or twice I faced about, and caught a glimpse of Edith, furtively dabbing at her eyes with her pocket handkerchief. But she might just as well have cried openly, for Uncle Henry was quite oblivious to everything and everybody but the baby in his arms.

"I declare," he said, at length, "if he isn't the very picture of Wilbur!"

Edith flung me a malicious smile. "Now, that's exactly what I said," she cried gayly. "And Wilbur said, 'The Lord forbid,' or words to that effect."

"Then Wilbur," said Uncle Henry severely, "ought to be ashamed of himself. I'd be pleased out of reason to have the baby look like *me*."

"Well," I said, boldly, "we did the best we could. He's named for you."

"Is he really?" said Uncle Henry. "Well, well, I *am* pleased, and no mistake."

When I left the office that night, from

force of habit I started for the restaurant where I had been in the habit of taking my meals; then I remembered and went on to the flat. I confess I was a little uneasy and more than a little curious as to how Edith and Uncle Henry and the orphan had made out during my absence. But the first glimpse I had of them reassured me. Uncle Henry, the clubman, the *bon vivant*, with a beatific expression of countenance, and one eye on the orphan whom, for safe-keeping, they had placed in a nest of pillows in a big

her breath. But her eyes laughed and challenged me, and I kissed her again.

Then, not to be outdone by Uncle Henry, I went out into the kitchen and cut bread and mixed salad dressing with willingness of execution that was matched only by my lack of skill.

The little dinner was really delightful, and had the question been put, as we lingered over our dessert, I would have stated most emphatically that, in my opinion, marriage was *not* a failure.

After dinner, while Edith warmed milk



DRAWN BY DAN SAYRE GROESBECK

"'They were my mother's songs,' said Edith." See page 394

clothes basket, was awkwardly washing lettuce for dinner. Edith, in a frilly blue gown that flew about her feet and gave distracting little glimpses of smart buckled slippers as she ran from kitchen to dining-room, was putting the finishing touches to the dinner table.

So much domesticity must have gone to my head, for I suddenly determined to have all that was coming to me, and caught Edith about the waist and kissed her.

"Aren't you ashamed?" she said under

and did various other things for the orphan, Uncle Henry and I washed up the dishes. As we broke only one plate, two cups and a butter-clip, I thought we did rather well for beginners, though Edith did intimate that if we kept on at that rate we'd soon be forced to eat from tin dishes.

There was a piano in our parlor, and when the last of the dishes had been put away, and the orphan (who really was an uncommonly good baby) had gone to sleep, Edith touched the keys soft-

ly and sang snatches of old ballads.

I've absolutely no ear for music, can't tell one note from another, and wouldn't recognize a sharp or a flat if I happened to meet it face to face, but to me there was something wonderfully appealing about Edith's simple songs. Uncle Henry seemed to feel it, too. He sat with his face in the shadow, and though he lit a cigar, yet it very soon went out and I noticed he made no effort to relight it. When at last he spoke I would not have recognized his voice, it was so changed, so tender.

"It's been years and years," he said, "since I've heard those songs. There was one who used to sing them to me once—a very long time ago."

"They were my mother's songs," said Edith softly. "She taught them to me when I was a little girl—before she died."

Uncle Henry leaned forward suddenly, and when he spoke there was an odd little catch in his voice. "Edith," he said, "tell me, was your mother Marion Worthington?"

"Yes," Edith said. "Did you know her?"

"Did I know her?" Uncle Henry's voice quivered. "Child, child, she was the woman I loved—the *only* woman I ever loved. And once, I think, she loved me—before your father came into her life. Oh, in my sorrow and anguish I have questioned the justice and mercy of God; I have said that for me the future could hold no good thing in store. And to think that now, after all these years, I have found Marion's daughter!"

In that moment, I think all the blue devils who were lying around loose, out of a job, came and took possession of me. Edith and Uncle Henry, it was perfectly clear, had forgotten me as completely as if I had never existed. He had gone over and lifted her off the piano stool, and was holding her as if he never meant to let her go. She was clinging to him, and crying softly on his shoulder, and I—well, I simply wasn't in it in any way, shape or manner.

I got my hat and went out and walked the streets, and, for the first time in my life, I knew what real, genuine, heartsick

lonesomeness was like. I couldn't understand it, and presently I didn't even try to. I only knew that with all my heart and soul I wanted something I didn't have. But that it was so absurd, I think I would have diagnosed my state of mind as equal parts unrequited love and jealousy.

Finally, when I'd about walked the soles off my shoes, I went back to my wife who wasn't my wife at all, but who, in the course of time, would probably be Uncle Henry's. Oh, it didn't require clairvoyant powers to say how it would end. Uncle Henry wasn't fifty yet, and he was extremely good-looking, not to say handsome; what more natural than that he should marry the daughter of the woman he had loved in his youth? It would be a very good thing for Edith, too. Even I had to admit that, though I do not at all approve of the mating of December and May.

I made a good deal of unnecessary noise in the hall, and I cleared my throat vigorously when I opened the parlor door. But I needn't have been at such pains to announce my coming, for only Edith was in the room—Edith curled up in the Morris chair and sobbing softly with her handkerchief to her eyes.

The sight of her tears made me savage. If Uncle Henry had been saying anything to hurt her feelings—

"Edith," I said, "what is it? Has Uncle Henry—?"

"Oh, no, no," Edith interrupted quickly. "It's not that at all. You don't understand. I'm crying because I'm *glad*, because your uncle is such a dear, and because, strange as it may seem, I believe he actually cares for me."

"It's not strange at all," I interpolated vigorously.

Edith sent me an April smile. "I haven't been so happy in years," she went on, "not since mother died. I've been so lonely, you can't think! And you don't know how I've hated living all by myself in a hall bedroom, and not belonging to anybody. That's why I did this crazy thing; even to pretend that I belonged to somebody seemed better than not belonging at all. And now to-night,

since Uncle Henry talked so beautifully to me, I'm finding it hard to remember that it's all a pretense. Oh, I hope Uncle Henry will stay for years and years! I'm abominably selfish, I dare say, and it's horrid for you, I know, but I'm going to make it seem real just as long as ever I can. And if Uncle Henry finds us out it'll be through no fault of mine."

For the next half hour I cordially hated Uncle Henry. It was Uncle Henry—confound him!—who had made Edith feel that she "belonged." It was Uncle Henry whom she loved, though as yet she was all unconscious of it. But, eventually, she'd find it out, and then—well, then they'd go and be married and live happy ever afterward. They'd probably want to take the orphan with them; certainly they were quite capable of it. But him, I resolved, they should not have. From the wreck of my home I'd save something, if it were only the orphan. And he and I would live together and grow old together. He wouldn't be a very stimulating companion, certainly—in the nature of things he couldn't be, because of his very immature years—but

he'd be better than nobody at all. And sometimes, on a Sunday, perhaps, out of the kindness of their hearts, Edith and Uncle Henry would ask us to dinner. We'd go, of course, though I wasn't at all sure that going wouldn't hurt more than staying away. I sighed unhappily and looked down at Edith in the Morris chair.

"You like this—this sort of thing?" I said, with a wave of my hand that seemed vaguely to indicate a good many things.

"Oh, don't I?" Edith said happily. "I'm as domestic as they're made. It's so good to fuss around a house and cook little messes, and, well, just do things, you know. There's nothing in life half so satisfying as a home and babies and——"

She hesitated, flushing.

"And what, Edith?" I begged.

"And a husband," she finished softly.

My lips were parted to say something, but just then the orphan cried, and Edith got up hurriedly to go to him. At the door she paused a moment, her hand on the knob.

"You've been so dear and kind," she said, half shyly, with the pretty color still in her cheeks, "since—since we began this, you know. I'd like to thank you if I knew how. Why, you couldn't be nicer if I really were your wife."

I wanted to say something nice in return, but she was gone before my stumbling tongue could frame the words.

The next night I brought home a man to dinner. He was a

traveling man whom I had met that day for the first time, and whom I never expected to see again. Perhaps I introduced him into our ménage for the sake of imparting atmosphere and local color (I trust those are the proper terms) to the fiction we had gotten up for Uncle Henry's benefit, and perhaps for the joy



DRAWN BY D. S. GPOESBECK

"My hands are all over flour."

See page 39

of presenting Edith as my wife. You can take your choice.

He was a cheerful, "hail-fellow-well-met" sort of chap, was Mr. Baring, and he took to Edith in a way that made me positively green-eyed. He seemed to like the orphan, too, for he prodded him with a big forefinger, and called him a "jolly little beggar." Which, of course, made him solid with Uncle Henry, who was manifestly of the opinion that his namesake was the most remarkable baby that ever happened.

Mr. Baring ate a lot and talked more, which, taken in conjunction, was a somewhat remarkable feat. He discoursed at length upon the marriage laws in force in different parts of the country, that probably having struck him as an appropriate subject for conversation and one that could not fail of interesting his audience.

"Queer law they've made in one of the states," he said. "New Jersey or Pennsylvania, I think it is, though possibly it's neither. If a man sells a piece of property his wife must sign the deed with him, and if he permits a woman not his wife to sign as his wife that constitutes a legal marriage."

We expressed our polite interest and passed Mr. Baring the radishes. He graciously accepted a handful and continued: "In this state you do things rather better. To be legally married a couple have only to announce themselves man and wife before two competent witnesses."

Uncle Henry murmured, "Indeed!" And Edith offered Mr. Baring the bread, but for my part I only stared, for it began to dawn upon me that if what our guest said was true, then, in the eyes of the law, Edith was my wife.

In the exuberance of my joy I could have turned handsprings from one end of the flat to the other. Edith was mine, mine, and I'd like to see Uncle Henry, or for the matter of that, any other man get her away from me.

My mood of proprietary joy lasted till our guest had taken his obviously reluctant departure. Then, in spite of myself, I began to see the situation from Edith's point of view. A nice return, wasn't it,

for her goodness in helping a fellow out of the very worst hole mortal man ever tumbled into?

If it would pass as reparation I was ready to commit any indiscretion, from suicide to full confession to Uncle Henry. But, before doing anything so irrevocable as the first or so rash as the second, I determined to ascertain her wishes in the matter.

She was in the kitchen, absorbed in some mysterious household rites, and thither I betook myself. She greeted me with a smile that went right down to the bottom of my heart, and stayed there to be remembered and loved and sighed over in the days when she should have gone out of my life.

She was standing by the kitchen table with a big, shiny tin pan before her, and she was "setting bread." Did you ever see a girl "set bread"? No, I thought not. It's an accomplishment that has rather gone out in these days of steam bakeries and three-for-ten-cents loaves of bread. Well, I can tell you right now it's a mighty pretty sight, especially if the girl happens to be the girl, and if she has cunning little dimples in her little white hands, and wears a big blue gingham apron tied about her trim little waist.

"This," said Edith, "is certainly a case of mental telepathy. I was wishing you would come."

"Were you, Edith?" I said. "Oh, were you, really?"

"Yes," she answered, in a matter of fact tone. "I wanted you to fix the yeast for me. My hands are all over flour."

It was like a dash of cold water. I took the small lump of spongy white substance she said was a "yeast cake," dropped it into half a cup of warm water, according to directions, and stirred it with conscientious vigor and a teaspoon.

"I suppose," Edith said, "it isn't really necessary for me to make bread, but I like to do it. It's so—so homey and nice, you know."

"Yes," I said absently.

She tucked her bread up under a clean white towel and went over to the sink to wash her hands.

"I wonder," she said, over her shoulder, "where it will all end?"

"In the divorce court at Sioux City," I answered promptly and lugubriously.

Edith turned and faced me, her wet fingers scattering water over the floor. "Your troubles," she said, "have certainly turned your brain. I've always understood that to be divorced a person had first to be married."

"Just so," I agreed. "And we *are* married."

"No, I'm not demented," I said hurriedly, for I had detected the anxious glance she threw toward the closed door. "But didn't you hear what Baring said at dinner?"

"He said such a lot of things," she said, half apologetically, "that——"

And then I saw the light of comprehension kindle in her eyes.

"Merciful heaven!" she gasped. "Why, so we are!"

For a long time we stood and stared into each other's eyes. Then Edith laughed nervously. "The way of the transgressor——" she quoted.

"That's rot," I cut in shortly. "It's not the transgressor who's got to suffer this time. It's *you*. Oh, Edith, I can't tell you how sorry I am. I wouldn't have had this happen for worlds. I'll do anything, *anything* to make it up to you, if you'll only tell me *what* you want done. You'll want to be getting a divorce, of course. It's the only thing you *can* do. But after you've got it, Edith, will you let me come to see you sometimes? Will you let me try to make you love me?"

"Why," said Edith very softly, and with very pink cheeks, "do you consider it necessary to wait until *after* I get my divorce?"

I crossed that kitchen at one bound. "Edith," I cried, "dear heart, do you mean *that*? Do you?"

Her answer was smothered against my coat, but it was entirely satisfactory.

"And what of the orphan?" I asked, after—well, I shall leave that to your imagination.

"It's a terrible thing," said Edith gently, "for a poor little baby to have

neither father nor mother, and the orphan is such a dear——"

"We'll keep him, of course," I cried, jubilantly, remembering how, but twenty-four hours before, I had, with such resignation as I might, accepted the orphan as sole companion of my future years.

"And the next thing in order," I said, "will be confession to Uncle Henry."

But Edith shook her head. "Why should we confess?" she said. "It would only grieve Uncle Henry. He's had troubles of his own, and plenty of them, too."

That might be bad ethics, but it struck me as being sound common sense.

"Upon my soul," I said, "I believe you're right. But I'd feel a lot better to make a clean breast of everything and get his forgiveness."

Edith sighed. "So would I," she confessed. "But then, don't you see, we'd be making Uncle Henry pay the price of our deception. Somebody's got to do that, you know, and I think it should be *we*."

"Sweetheart," I said, "you're right. Uncle Henry shall never know."

Then the door opened, and Uncle Henry came in. He had the baby (the orphan no longer, but from henceforth little Henry Eustis) in his arms, and one glance at his contented face convinced me, if, indeed, I required further convincing, that we had decided wisely and well.

"Now," he said, "I've caught you at it. A year married, and spooning like a pair of just betrothed lovers."

Edith blushed furiously and I could feel the roots of my hair take fire. She freed herself from my embrace and went over to Uncle Henry.

"Uncle Henry," she said, "we, Wilbur and I, want you to come and live with us for always."

Uncle Henry's eyes were moist and there was a catch in his voice when he answered.

"My dear," he said, "if you hadn't asked me, I think I should have invited myself."

Some Dramas of the Day

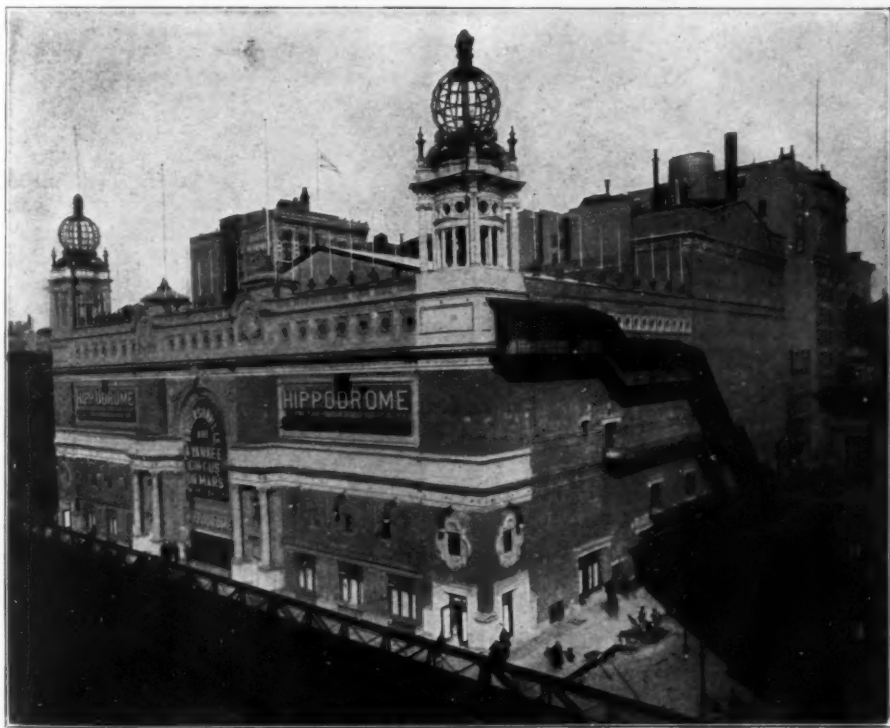
BY ACTON DAVIES

Some wise man has said that your real New Yorker never grows up. He may live to be 80 and defy all the rules and theories of Dr. Osler, but down in his anatomy somewhere there is a wide swath of the small boy still vernal. I have come to believe this statement emphatically, after watching the hordes—I cannot say audiences, that is far too small to express it—of New Yorkers of all ages, sizes and conditions which have been tumbling into the great Hippodrome ever since it opened on April 12. Two performances a day are given, and the theater seats 5,400 people, and yet to-day, seven weeks after its opening, seats are still selling three and four weeks ahead. The success which this new theatrical institution has scored is without parallel in theatrical annals.

Not only have the crowds been greater

than New York ever knew before, but the show itself has eclipsed all previous theatrical standards. Not content with offering a magnificent pageant, as jolly an hour of extravaganza as has ever been shown, the management on top of that presents a ballet which for grace and beauty of color and movement stands alone. And then, by way of a climax, they give the most varied, thrilling and hair-raising circus performance, which must make all of their rivals feel like throwing up their hands. And even that is not all that they give you for your money at the Hippodrome, for after the circus and ballet are over, the great war play, "The Raiders," calling for the services of 600 actors and 40 horses, gives you another bewildering and thrilling half-hour.

Since the immense success which the Hippodrome scored at its first perform-



The Hippodrome, New York's newest place of amusement.

ance, Managers Thompson and Dundy are billing it everywhere as "The National Theater." I am not sure that they are far wrong, for this playhouse, with its colossal series of attractions, is destined to be more than a pastime for New Yorkers only. Mahomets from every state and town will journey to this theatrical mountain. It is bound to be a national playhouse. At its very outset it has eclipsed all its European rivals, while as an architectural triumph the building itself is one of the crowning gems in New York's diadem. All the world and his wife and all their grandchildren will journey to the Hippodrome, and for once they will receive even more than their imagination has painted in its most vivid moments.

If you can imagine the private theater of the Colossus of Rhodes, doubled in size but made as snug and comfortable as a cozy corner, you will have some idea of the immensity and yet compactness of

this new play-house. When you first enter, it is the immensity of the stage alone which impresses you. You take your seat in your orchestra chair and you feel in quite as intimate relations with the stage as you do at either the Empire, the Belasco or any of the other handbox theaters. Then you turn about, and little by little the vastness of the structure dawns upon you. To the rear stretches out a balcony which reaches all the way from 43rd to 44th Streets and seats 1,500 people. Above it, as far as the eye can reach, looms the gallery, that happy-hunting-ground of the gods, where nearly 3,000 of them can sit in convention at one time. On either side there are myriads of boxes, and perhaps the greatest feat which the architect, Mr. Frederick Thompson, has achieved, is the fact that from every one of those 5,400 seats you can see and hear every motion and word that takes place upon the stage.

And now as to the performance. The



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The ballet at the Hippodrome.



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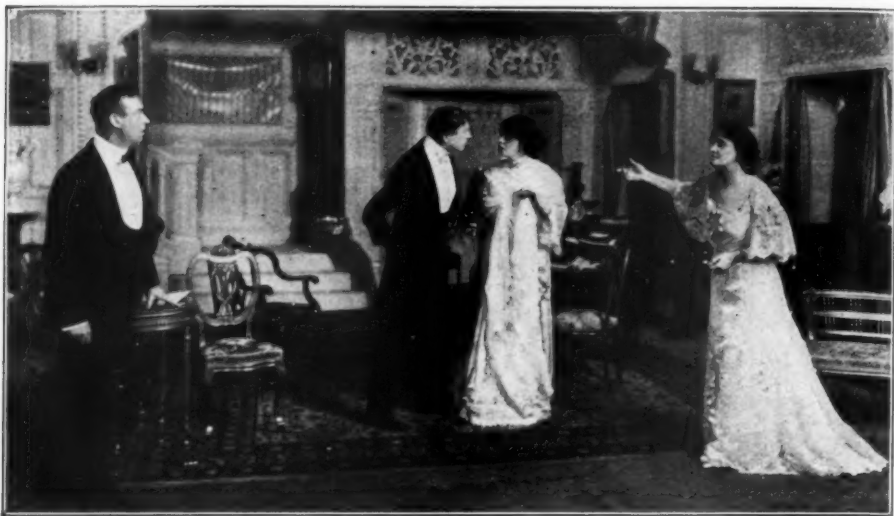
A summer chorus at the Hippodrome.

first part is entitled "A Yankee Circus on Mars." The first scene carries you back to your green apple days, for there in all its glory stands a real old country circus. All the tents are there, just as dirty and weather-beaten as they used to be; the huge pictures of the fat lady, the Circasian beauty, and the skeleton man are just as vivid in their colorings as they used to be in days of yore. And in front of the tents, chattering, clamoring, with all their mouths agape, and eyes bulging with wonder, stands the same old crowd, that crowd in which you and I and every other youngster who ever grew up in a village or small town has often played a leading or misleading part. But the fates have been unkind to this particular circus, the ghost has not walked for weeks, the freaks clamoring for back salaries suddenly walk out into the open in all their paraphernalia and inform the managers that they are going on strike. The other performers follow suit, and things are rapidly reaching a climax when the sheriff dawns on the horizon, swoops down upon the organization, and attaches the whole show.

Just as the baby elephant is put up at auction there is a sudden buzz and hum among the villagers, and a strange, red, weird-looking creature, with horns and a rectangular-shaped head, drops from out

the sky. The only human things about him are the diamond studs which blaze in his shirt front. He announces that he is a messenger from Mars. The King of Mars, it seems, is suffering from *ennui*, and having read in some of the Sunday colored supplements from American journals, which are occasionally blown up and down the Milky Way, of the wonders of the Yankee circus, he has sent this messenger with an airship to capture the first traveling circus which he encounters and bring it back to Mars. Finding that this circus is in such sore straits, the messenger volunteers to buy it on the spot. The only trouble is he hasn't any money, but that is easily settled by his pawning one of the largest diamonds. Then the entire show, from the baby elephant to the peanut vender, embarks on the airship and it is "Ho! for Mars."

The second scene shows the Court of Honor of the King of Mars. He seems a jolly old soul, made up as a cross between Old King Cole and Little Joe Weber of Weber & Fields. He frequently expressed himself as being d-e-l-i-g-h-t-e-d, and has an enduring penchant for the twenty-four pretty milkmaids whom he employs to skim the milk on the Milky Way. The task of these milkmaids is rather a sinecure, because the King has them driven to and from



PHOTOGRAPH BY BYRON, NEW YORK

Scene from "Mrs. Temple's Telegram."

their work in two huge automobiles, of which the chauffeurs are live elephants. How these automobiles got on Mars, of course neither the programme nor the synopsis stops to explain, but there they are and the elephants steer them just as recklessly as if they were Mr. E. R. Thomas, W. K. Vanderbilt, Jr., or any of the other young multi-millionaires who make a specialty of running down anything which dares to cross their path.

The arrival of the circus throws the King into an ecstasy of delight. He is formally introduced to all the performers, and then, magnanimously ordering his throne to be shoved into the background, he orders the circus hands to do their worst. In the twinkling of an eye two circus rings have been erected; trapezes loom in midair, beautiful ladies bound through the old familiar hoops, and a full orchestra of elephants plays "Home, Sweet Home" just as cheerfully with their tails, trunks and feet as if Mother Earth was not several billion miles away.

This circus performance lasts for three quarters of an hour, but into it are crowded more wonderful feats than any circus that has yet shown. Perhaps many feats just as wonderful have been seen in the regulation circus tents, but the charm of being so close to the per-

formers, who have the immeasurable advantage of the lighting effects which only a great theater can supply, gives these acts a realism and sensationalism which enhances them immensely. The acts themselves I don't so much want to describe, because they change so frequently, but on the other hand this circus feature, with its constant introduction of novelties, is going to make the Hippodrome a permanent magnet, for real New Yorkers—men and women—can easily stand seeing this part of the production once in every two or three weeks, because it always offers something new. Possibly the strongest feature of the bill at present is the Clarkonians. These three young Englishmen, not content as trapeze performers with being the acknowledged Kings of the Midair, also offer an equestrian specialty under the name of the Clarks which is quite as marvelous as anything they do on the trapeze. So great has been the success which the Clarkonians have scored, that Thompson and Dundy have put them under contract for several years.

But the real idol of the show is Marceline, the clown. America has never seen his equal since the days of George Fox, and as an actor there is no artist who has come out of Europe in years

who can touch this droll little Spaniard in his side-splitting antics. When I say actor I mean actor, because, after all, Marceline's work is more than either buffoonery or acrobatics. He is a master of the art of caricature, and as a pantomimist I have never seen his equal. When he first appeared, all New York asked, "How did such a funny man come out of England?" The immense success which he had scored for two years at the London Hippodrome had given the impression that he was English born. This is not true, as you would realize if you talked to Marceline for five minutes. He is a Latin to his finger tips, but, curiously enough, his sojourn in England has given him the drollest little cockney accent. Since Jumbo came from England a quarter of a century ago, there has been no circus feature which has won so unanimous and enthusiastic a reception as was Marceline's upon that opening night, and, for that matter, at every performance since. Like the real little artist that he is, he rarely gives two performances alike, and it is a common thing in the Hippodrome, when Marceline's scene comes on, to see Mr. Thompson, Mr. Dundy, and all the

other members of the house staff, crowding into the theater just to see what he is going to do next.

It was rather curious, the way in which Mr. Thompson finally induced him to come to America. He had made him several offers of an immense increase of salary over what he was drawing in London, but Marceline refused them all point-blank. Just as Mr. Thompson had given up in despair and had engaged "Slivers," the American clown, to take his place, a cable came from Marceline saying that he would gladly come for any salary which Mr. Thompson was pleased to give him. It was not until he arrived here that the reason of his change of heart was discovered. Two tumblers and an elephant trainer who were particular pals of Marceline had been engaged for the Hippodrome, and as soon as this King of Clowns heard of this he was perfectly willing to come. Now Marceline has fallen so desperately in love with America that he has cabled for his wife.

Just a word here about the two men who, after Mr. Thompson, have done the most to bring the Hippodrome to its present huge success. I speak of Mr. Edward Temple, the stage manager, and



PHOTOGRAPH BY BYRON, NEW YORK

Scene from "Mrs. Temple's Telegram."

Mr. Arthur Voegtlin, the scenic artist.

Until one has seen the performance, it is quite impossible to realize what Mr. Temple has accomplished, with what was practically a small army of raw recruits. In viewing the chorus women and the ballet, the first thing which strikes you is not alone their cleverness and grace, but their extreme youth and their fresh, clear voices. This was accomplished by Mr. Temple's establishing a school of acting of his own early last autumn. It was Mr. Thompson's contention that there was no reason on earth why

with those typical old baldheads who frequent only those theaters where the prettiest women are to be seen. This in itself may be a very small recommendation for the performance, but it shows at least that Thompson and Dundy, when they added extravaganza to their other features, were wise enough to set a new pace for all the other managers to follow.

But it is in the ballet and in the singing of the choristers that Mr. Temple has accomplished his finest work. The freshness, modesty and charm of these really young women bring the Hippo-



PHOTOGRAPH BY HALL, NEW YORK

A scene from "The Rollicking Girl."

American girls should not make as good dancers as any imported from either Italy, France or England, and so from an army of applicants Mr. Temple gradually selected a chorus of three or four hundred young, pretty and graceful American girls. Of the entire company as it stands at present there are not more than 20 women who have ever been on the stage before they began their engagement at the Hippodrome, and what's the result? The front rows of the orchestra, both afternoon and night, are thronged

drome one of its most charming attractions. The ballet, "The Dance of the Hours," has been shown us on various occasions in a more or less old-fashioned, hatchet-faced, club-footed manner at the Metropolitan Opera House, where usually the pirouetting of one *premier danseuse* was expected to atone for all the clumsy gyrations of the other 30 or 40 ballet girls. Here at the Hippodrome we have one hundred and fifty good-looking women on the stage and every one of them an experienced dancer. The

bewildering beauty of this ballet as it is now interpreted defies description, and it is only fair to add that the splendid conducting of Mr. Emanuel Klein with his superb orchestra greatly enhances its charm.

Of Arthur Voegtlin, who painted all the scenery for this great series of productions, it is only fair to say that he has proved himself the son of his father. The elder Voegtlin was the greatest scene painter of his day, but nothing that he ever did was on so superb a scale as this production of his son.

When it is remembered that the two originators of this theatrical project are still very young men—Mr. Thompson, who devised all the practical schemes, both of the performance and the structure, has not yet celebrated his thirty-second birthday, and Mr. Dundy, the man who wheedled the financial ammunition out of the pockets of a Wall Street king, is only 35—the complete success of the Hippodrome seems a still greater matter for general congratulations.



PHOTOGRAPH BY HALL, NEW YORK

Hattie Williams and Sam Bernard in "The Rollicking Girl."

In "The Raiders" the entire front of the mammoth stage sinks in full view of the audience, and inside of some 30 seconds becomes an enormous tank of water. As the curtain rises on the battle scene this tank becomes a rocky ford, and



PHOTOGRAPH BY HALL, NEW YORK

A scene from "The Rollicking Girl."

in the course of the action some thirty horses and their riders plunge into the tank and swim to the far side of the stage. This is the scene which invariably brings the audience to its feet. It is the supreme climax of a performance which bristles with climaxes from its very start.

After such a panegyric as this about the Hippodrome it certainly would be a relief if I could look about and see some

broken-English comedians. He has never been funnier than in the present play, which goes far to raise this form of entertainment out of the vulgar rut into which the Roger brothers and others of their ilk have brought it. "The Rollicking Girl" is Mr. Frohman's first venture into the field of summer shows, and in the daintiness of its costume and setting, the cleverness of its songs and the skill of its chief comedian it sets a new pace for his rivals in this field.

At the Lyceum Miss Ethel Barrymore, fired by a very laudable ambition, essayed the difficult rôle of *Nora* in Ibsen's "A Doll's House," for a fortnight's run. Miss Barrymore's thousands of admirers turned out in full force and kept the theater comfortably filled during her engagement. Oddly enough, Miss Barrymore was more successful in the serious scenes than she was in those episodes where *Nora* is shown merely as a light-hearted butterfly. The experiment was an interesting one, and from an artistic standpoint it advanced Miss Barrymore, but there was nothing in it to warrant her, while she is still so young and pretty a girl, in attempting such serious and morbid rôles.

In a season which has been remarkable for its few laughing successes, "Mrs. Temple's Telegram," which has recently started out on tour after a very successful season at the Madison Square, is a notable exception. This little farce, with William Morris in its principal rôle, is one of the cleverest laughter-makers that the town has seen in some seasons. While the theme of its plot is not particularly original, the story itself has been worked out most cleverly, and the complications follow one another so thick and fast that you have no time to stop and analyze the absurdities of the situation. Mr. Morris dropped out of Broadway's ken nine or ten years ago, after his success at the Empire in "The Girl I Left Behind Me." From that time until this season he has played almost entirely outside of New York. The surprise was all the greater, therefore, when in this little play he returned and scored a legitimate light comedy success.



PHOTOGRAPH BY HALL, NEW YORK

Miss Ethel Barrymore as *Nora* in "A Doll's House."

play of the month which really deserved a roast. But at this fag end of the season, new productions are few and far between, and the only recent important one, Charles Frohman's "The Rollicking Girl," calls for unstinted praise. Mr. Sam Bernard, its star, has long been recognized as "The Kaiser" of German

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The months of midsummer, when the days are long and the evenings are short, are a season of their own in the publication world. It is then that the attractive magazine of meritorious short fiction is at a peculiar advantage, and finds a peculiar welcome at the hands of its readers. This is not the time when the average man or woman looks for exhaustive studies upon economic, political, industrial and financial problems. It is rather the time for relaxation and recuperation, and this condition may be obtained as truly in the reading matter selected as in the physical and social habits of the season. Vacation days do not necessarily or preferably mean absolute idleness, but instead, a change of occupation sufficient to fortify the energy in preparation for another year.

Such a magazine as *THE RED BOOK*, therefore, has a peculiar obligation at this time, and the publishers believe that the pages of the current number, and its immediate successors, will demonstrate a very full appreciation of this fact. The one who chooses *THE RED BOOK* for his summer reading on hotel or cottage veranda, in lakeside camp, or on steamer deck, will find that the stories have been chosen with a particular view to their cheerful, entertaining, summery qualities, at the same time that due regard has been paid to the literary standards of excellence which are always maintained. There is another point of advantage in the fact that *THE RED BOOK* carries no serial stories or long novelettes. Each number is complete in itself, and the reader whose summer keeps him on the wing does not need to fear the loss of some connecting link at the height of a literary climax.

The current number of *THE RED BOOK* is an earnest of the timeliness and the excellence of the fiction features which will follow throughout the summer. "The Flag-Raising at Gray's Gulch," by Forrest Crissey, is a Fourth-of-July story that passes clear outside the realm of the hackneyed, and combines genuine novelty with genuine feeling and patriotic sentiment of the best sort. "The Nymph," by Ethel Sigsbee Small, is as dainty as an idyll, with a summer charm

that will be felt by every reader. It seems invidious to call special attention to a single selection out of such a fascinating list. Stories of romance, stories of humor, stories of western adventure, and stories of emotion and primitive passions are mingled in these pages in proper proportion to entertain the most exacting critic, and the list of contributors, including such names as Herbert Quick, Marjorie Benton Cooke, Roy E. Norton, Una Hudson, Tilton Richardson, Margaret Busbee Shipp, Leo Crane, Aldis Dunbar and others, is a noteworthy one.

The August *RED BOOK* follows its predecessor in general plan, and comes even closer to being the ideal magazine for which the publishers constantly strive. The cover design is peculiarly seasonable in the grace and charm of its coloring and its scene. A summer girl swinging merrily amid the greenery of forest-trees, suggests a coolness truly refreshing in August.

The portrait section of art photograph studies will contain twenty-four pictures of beautiful women as heretofore, printed in the double tone sepias that give them almost the quality of an etching or a photogravure.

The fiction of the number will be noteworthy, for several of the stories included, and for the illustrations which accompany them.

"A Debt Well Paid," by John A. Steuart, is a dainty combination of a romantic love story with an adventurous deed of daring, in the days when Scotch and English were at war over the claims of the Pretender to the throne. A brave Scotch lassie is the heroine, and the plots and counterplots of the opposing forces help to make up the tale. The scenes and the situations are favorable to the illustrator's art, and the accompanying pictures by R. H. Frown lend additional charm to the narrative.

"The Discoverer's Privilege," by Owen Oliver, is one of the best of the dainty love stories in which that prolific writer strikes his happiest vein. We need only to suggest the combination of desert island, bachelor scientist and pretty girl to indicate the possibilities of the plot. Hitherto, the young scientist has devoted

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his attention entirely to butterflies, but the time comes when he is diverted to another species. The illustrations are by D. J. Lavin.

Another summer story of cheerful romance is "The Girl in Gray," by Porter Emerson Browne, in which the characters are those young men and women who would naturally assemble at a house-party in the country for the festivities in celebration of a summer wedding. College men and girls, horse-back rides through shady lanes, strolls in the moonlight, and an automobile runaway for a climax, are among the essential details, but the charm of the story lies in the telling of it, and it must be read to be appreciated. Pictures by Emile Nelson accompany the story.

But the August RED BOOK is not all made up of love stories. Even the ones just indicated are only selections from a longer list that might be named. There are stories of strength and humor and adventure, to vary what might otherwise be monotony.

Of the first, we may name a powerful sketch, entitled "The Children," by Leo Crane, which is peculiarly timely because of its subject-matter. It is a story of a hospital train filled with wounded Russian soldiers, returning homeward across Siberia from the Manchurian battle-fields. To a war-correspondent who boards the train for some interviews, they recount some of the dramatic incidents they have undergone, and relate the story of the assault on a temple tower, that is almost a masterpiece of battle narrative. Mr. Crane has interpreted well the peculiar psychological composite which makes up the character of the Russian peasant, in every one of whom, however illiterate, a poet or an artist is latent. The illustrations have been made by Edgar Bert Smith.

In strong contrast to the usual "busi-

ness" story, is a deliciously humorous skit by Karl Edwin Harriman, entitled "The Brains of Templeton Twiggs." The hero is an inventor who invents with equal facility under all circumstances, and accomplishes things the like of which were never known before; first to the discomfiture and then to the profit of the corporation magnates who join forces with him. Pictures by Walter J. Enright interpret the humor of the story most excellently.

"The Training of Tad Tree," by Nathaniel Hamilton Maxwell, is a genuine novelty in the list of fiction for grown-ups, in which the hero is a child. Mr. Maxwell has found a real boy in the person of one who aspires to be a jockey, and who knows all about horses, though he fails sadly in spelling. The struggles of the boy, and of the patient school-teacher, to adapt themselves to each other's exactions, make a genuinely human story. Maginel Wright Enright contributes a set of her noteworthy illustrations to the embellishment of the story.

"A Pledge Redeemed," by Elliott Flower, is a story that will touch the sensibilities of many a man, for it relates the harrowing experience that befalls a certain community when a newly elected assessor actually tries to place correct valuations on every piece of property, in harmony with his campaign pledges, which he has made in good faith, instead of for the simple purpose of assisting the campaign managers to carry the election.

These stories that have been indicated are typical selections from the list of fifteen that make up the table of contents in the August RED BOOK. The others are equally attractive to the reader, and the issue is offered with the confidence of the publishers that it will justify the generous patronage that THE RED BOOK is receiving.